

In commemoration of 2500<sup>th</sup> year of Buddhism

# FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

*The Four Noble Truths (English Version)*

Composed by

**Professor**

**Re'rukāne' Chandawimala**

(D. litt, pundit. Supreme master of the Buddhist scriptures)

**Mahanayaka Thera**

*English Translation*

*by :*

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## **From the Secretary of the Sri Chandawimala Dhamma Treatises Preservation Board....**

Buddhism is Philosophical as well as closely harmonious to Science.

The world will be a better place, more salubrious and more serene to a much more greater extent than the situation that has been brought forth now on earth by materialists and theological dogmatists who are also fanatics, had an attempt being made by denizens of the world, leaving behind their preconceived notions, to discern the discourses and the doctrinology of Buddhism.

At the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Buddhism, which dawned in 1956, Ven Rerukane Chandawimala Thera, in yet another wholesome attempt at bringing home the concepts of Buddhism, wrote 28 books on various Buddhist themes, which are in simplicity of expression, depth and profundity, that are equal or better of any other such treatise.

Several attempts that were made to make available the Mahathera's works were not successful and ended in failure. It despairingly amounted to failure, finding a person who had the requisite knowledge of English, depth of understanding the doctrine (dhamma) and the commitment needed to execute such a task.

Mr. Viranjeewa Weerakkody by electing himself to translate it which he did within a short period of time and also extended his helping hands to proof read before the book was set for printing. Mr. Viranjeewa Weerakkody's effort in trying to bring home the truth should be highly complimented.

**C. Thanippuli Arachi**

Hon. Secretary of the  
Sri Chandawimala Dhamma  
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## About the Author

Ven. Prof. Rérūkāné Chadawimala Mahanayaka Thera (Pravachana Vishāradha; Pundit: Dharmasastra Shiromanī) was a mighty, brilliant and quite extraordinary Buddhist monk who represented the tradition of the elders (théravāda), well known for his acute intelligence, perspicacity, rational thinking and cogent, lucid scholarly writing and discourses. Ven. Maha Thera, a great erudite scholar, has authored over twenty five books covering diverse topics of Buddhist Philosophy ranging from Abidhamma, meditation and various other Buddhist doctrinological aspects in the Sinhala language. Most of the Ven. Mahā thera's books, though appealing to laymen and scholars alike, in order to make full use of his Abidhamma and meditation treatises one must have some prior grounding in Buddhist philosophical principles.

Born on 1897 July 19 to a devout Buddhist family in the village of Rérūkāna, he had the lay name Rubal Gunawardena. His Father being Don Bustian De Poulis Gunawardena and mother - Munasighage Podinona. He was the eldest in the family of one younger sister and four younger brothers. After having studied in the high school at Veediyawatte upto the second standard, he entered the sangha, the community of Buddhist monks, when he was below nine years of age, after conceding to a mere casual request by his father. he was ordained as a monk on January 8th 1906 along with twenty seven others, of which group he was the youngest under the

then chief incumbent of the Vinayālankārāmaya at Pokunuvita, a Buddhist monk from Burma.

Later, he was sent to Burma for Buddhist studies and subsequent higher ordination; wherein he distinguished himself in Abidhamma philosophy in particular and Buddhism in General. So also, the Mahanayaka thera acquired proficiency in Pali, Sanskrit and Burmese languages. After ten years of intense activity in the field of Buddhism, he returned to Sri Lanka and initially lived the life of a peripatetic Buddhist monk before the Ven. Mahā Thera finally settled himself at Vinayālankārāmaya temple in Pokunuvita, Horana.

Vinayālankārāmaya became the centre of his Buddhist activity, from where he wrote books in lucid language to edify Buddhists and to clarify certain abstruse points of Buddhist philosophy, thus setting in motion a mighty Buddhist wheel in motion with relentless, indefatigable zeal and effort, with courage and enthusiasm that spurred many a Buddhist heart into practically following the path of Buddhist wisdom. A productive and a prolific writer, the Ven. Mahā Thera dispensed eternal truths of Buddhist wisdom with ease and intellectual taste. Herein, one particular point needs to be emphasized. Ven. Mahā Thera did not merely transliterate from the Pāli cannon, but wrote from empirical experiences he acquired from Samatha and Vidarshana meditation simultaneously quoting the most relevant passages of the Dhamma from canonical texts.

Ven. Mahā Thera's rationality was impeccable and his books were praised and hailed by Buddhist scholars and ordinary people interested in Dhamma, far and near, as immaculate expressions of Buddhist themes, very orthodox and only little open to question.

Ven. Kirioruwé Dhammananda, whose guru the Ven. Mahā Théra was for long continuous years, who associated the Ven. Mahā Thera up until the Ven. Māha Théra's last breath quite rightly believes the Ven. Mahā Thera to be an Arhat. Ven. Maha Thera attained to the supreme consummation on 1996 April eleventh.

Viranjeewa Weerakkody, in a splendid translation has opened the door that gives English readers all the world over of tasting the flavour of one of the most painstakingly, ardently and, above all, very accurately and profoundly written books - The Four Noble Truths of the Ven. Mahā Thera.

May all who read this treatise imbibe the quintessence of Buddhism, The Four Noble Truths which is what we particularly term as the philosophy of Buddhism or the Buddhist way of life and attain the supreme beatitude of Nirvana!!

## Preface

With regard to the man and beast who inhabit the world and other objects in the world, ordinary people have, by and large, a wrong understanding. They (ordinary people) consider (take for granted) a succession of events as a rigid material substance, minute specks of matter as huge material objects, conglomerations of tiny elements devoid of any personality as persons and animals with personalities, what is ephemeral as permanent, what is loathsome as attractive, suffering as comfort, cause of suffering as the cause of happiness, the true happiness and the way leading thereto as being smarting and acrimonious and so the reality has thus been grossly miscalculated. All these the Exalted One (Buddha) proclaimed as they really are. The nature of the world (universe) as seen by the Exalted One is termed “Aryasatya” (noble truth).

For the one who has wrongly understood the nature of the world, so firmly attached to the wrong notions regarding the world which he harbours in his mind, thinking in those misdirected lines of thought and therein acting derived out of those pseudo - currents of thought the truth laid bare by the exalted one would be discerned as false. Therefore for those of such a mental constitution grasping profound doctrine of the four Noble Truths would be hard indeed. The ultimate essence of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths. So, in order to be a real Buddhist a fair knowledge of the Four Noble Truths is required. Of those living today neither lay Buddhists nor a majority of

priests have at least a silhouette type knowledge of the noble truths. \* The Four Noble Truths cannot be learnt by oneself unaided but requires the help of a learned person. At least, for a person to discern the FNTs to a certain extent there must be well - written books in lucid language. As heretofore there has been a great dearth of books of such nature, we, according to the range of our knowledge, with unflinching effort compiled this work for the benefit of Buddhists in order that they may be able to imbibe some considerable portion of the knowledge of noble truths.

Among the commentarial literature, a long, detailed discussion of the FNTs is given in “Sammohavinodani” of **Vibhangaprakarana** and **Visudhimarga**. Ordinary people lacking the knowledge of the Pali language can make no use of them. Even with the knowledge of Pali, it is an onerous task to read and comprehend them. The FNTs are expatiated in these books for those who are already familiar with “paramatta Dhamma Vibhāga” (analysis of the ultimate elements of being) found in the **Dhammasangani Prakarana**. Only with the knowledge of Pali and no prior acquaintance with the “paramatta dhamma,” people who think that they know the reality just by reading only delude themselves. And this delusion is worse than not knowing. Nowadays there is a plethora of people who are deluded by reading canonical texts just with the knowledge of Pali.

Our intention was to compile a book for those who lack the knowledge of Pāli and paramatta dhamma in order that they acquire, at least to a certain extent, a pure knowledge of the

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\* The Buddha himself is an exemption to this where the paramis perfected enable him to self understand the FNTs at the instance of attaining enlightenment.

quintessence of Buddhism. Therefore we have deviated to another way from the way in which the FNTs have been explained in the orthodox religious treatises as **Sammōhavinōdani**. When compiling this treatise, we have kept in mind at each point “how should the point be explained so that the reader easily grasps it?” and put it in the best way we thought of.

Books of profound philosophy can be compiled but easily and effortlessly in a way which confers meaning and intellectual satisfaction just as it is in the case of a novel bringing out meaning and entertainment. Wherefore without expecting to capture the meaning of profound philosophies by sheer skill of the orators and writers, reader should exert special effort to discern by himself. Those who are desirous of accurately knowing the FNTs should not attempt reading this like a novel once or twice but read and reread again and again. By remembering the contents of the book, one should reminisce and think again and again. If thus followed, anybody with the knowledge of Sinhala can afford to have a fair knowledge of the FNTs. By diligently reading this treatise, learning the profound FNTs of the exalted one, becoming a Buddhist in the real sense of the term, may all try to liberate themselves from the samsāric suffering and attain the supreme blessedness of Nirvana!

(In the printing of this book, assistance was rendered by our students - Hengoda Kalyānadhamma and Kirioruvē Dhammananda - which I would like to state thankfully)

**Rérukāné Chandawimala**  
Sri Vinayālankārārāmaya  
Pokunuvita, Sri Lanka

2490  
1947 6<sup>th</sup> February



## Translator's Preface

When one refers to “Buddhist philosophy” or “Buddha - dhamma,” though the whole of Buddhism is included and taken for granted, actually what is really being referred to is the core or essence of Buddhism - The Four Noble Truths (FNTs). To wit, the fact of the immanence of suffering, the cause of such suffering, the cessation of such suffering and the way leading to the dissociation from such suffering. Although at the first glance of them, one might casually think that he or she understands them, it won't be immediately followed by liberation from suffering. What one should aim at is to empirically, experientially and noumenally cognize the FNTs for that cognition to be immediately followed up by liberation from the suffering mass of aggregates. And this is no easy task at all in spite of the claims that invariably come from some monks and lay - people. The exalted one has compared the comprehension of the FNTs to be harder than targeting with a bow strip of horse skin to a corner of another strip of horse skin placed two - hundred and ten feet away. This is ample evidence enough to render how difficult of comprehension are the FNTs. The late Ven. Prof. Rerukane Chandawimala Mahanayake Thera was an erudite scholar bhikku who wrote this treatise, FNTs, not only from his expert knowledge of ancient Pali scripts but, to a very much greater extent, with the empirical understanding he acquired through Samatha and Vipassanā meditation. To render such a lofty treatise into readable English has been no small task for a young fledgeling like me to undertake, however, I have

executed the rather daunting task to the best of my ability after having read the treatise myself.

If there's a detailed description of the FNTs with a skilful blend of wit, candour, rationality, lucidity and intuition sprung from empirical observation of phenomena and noumena, that should certainly be the best treatise on the FNTs - Quintessence of Buddhism. This book, no doubt, certainly meets this eulogy. Roaming through the narrow pathways in the jungle of philosophy, I was struck and convinced by the sagacity and profundity shown by the Ven. Maha Thera, the author of this treatise. It is the most descriptive, orthodox and profoundly pragmatic exposition of the FNTs. Originally written and published so long ago as 1947, it is a pity that such an indepth work would altogether have gone unnoticed and hence untranslated by the pundits of good old times.

At the outset, the fact should be emphasized that this treatise is not for the neophytes who are wanting in the basics of Buddhism. This is not suitable for those who want to get a first time glimpse of it. In order to imbibe the essence of this treatise one must, at least, have an elementary knowledge of Abhidhamma, profound psychological aspects of Buddhism with the knowledge of the analysis of the components of personality, a birds eye view of the theory of dependent origination and also a good knowledge of the very general aspects of Buddhism such as the three fundamental characteristics of existence, namely, anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering) and anatta (insubstantiality). In other words, those who can afford to read this treatise and benefit from it are those who are already quite well acquainted with Buddhism. However, although one may not be familiar with Buddhism, yet it has to be underscored that depending on one's background, utilizing utmost effort and reading thoroughly over and over again, one may be able to grasp despite

the aforementioned background for everyone is a part and parcel of reality which this treatise explore. Especially those who have drunk deep in the sciences such as biochemistry and molecular biology and also the philosophies as of Bergson, Hume and Satre would, as my experience goes, quit easily be able grasp the profundity herein contained, for there is the closest harmony among the western philosophic sciences and Buddhism (FNTs).

The other fact that I should perforce mention is that I have, in translating this treatise from Sinhala, departed from the traditional translational English terms, such as for instance, instead of the term “mind” I have used the phrase “mind current” the purport of which is to suppress the wrong notion of a permanent entity like “soul” being attributed to the term “mind”. In some other instances, I have used multiple translational terms in translating the same Sinhala word within the cause of the same paragraph or chapter. For example, the term “skandhas” has been translated as “aggregates” “khandhas,” “psycho - physical components,” “name - form,” “agglomerates” and “conglomerations.” One might wonder why likewise has been done. Let it be known that this I have done deliberately to familiarise the reader with the multiplicity of the terms of reference and to introduce variety and make the reading intellectually stimulating of the otherwise monotonous descriptive passages. To reiterate the fact, if I have translated the same word with two or, sometimes, more terms in the texts, I have so done for the aforesaid reason and for nothing else.

A significant facet inserted to the translation solely by me is the footnotes accompanying the main text of the translation. They explain, sometimes, at length, certain words and concepts which I think occidental readers of this treatise may have trouble with. Especially Pali and Sinhala words have been so expatiated. Some other concepts have been elaborated in the footnotes and procedures appropriate to the mastery of those

concepts unambiguously laid out. Besides the footnotes, at certain other places, I have added a sentence or so that I thought would enhance the understanding of the English reader. Wherein any such additions are thus made, I have taken care to mention that in the footnotes immediately following the addition. The other facet for which I have specially exerted myself is the introduction of some sinhalese expressions instead of their Pali counterparts. This would, in addition to supplementing the knowledge of the reader, help acquaint him with sinhalese, for, after all, next to Pali, Sinhalese is the vehicle in which Theravāda Buddhism has been expressed so eloquently.

I owe my deep gratitude to the senior student of the Mahānāyake Thera, Ven. Kirioruwe Dhammānada for discussing ably with me on some connotations of Buddhistic concepts, for arranging the proof - reading of the translated treatise and, so also, for giving permission and preparing the text for printing. I also like to congratulate and express my sincere thanks to the senior Sri Lanka administrative officer Mr. P.A. Tilekeratne at Kulupane, Pokunuvita for undertaking to proof-read this treatise, while so doing filling the gaps and thereby enhancing the clarity and style of this work. Insertion of appropriate pali excerpts and so arranging them in Juxtaposition with English translations is also his work while I was away in New Zealand.

Hereby, I place this book at the hands of the English speaking world and sincerely wish that this would, by and large, considerably broaden the depth of one's vision into the FNTs. May all attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana!

**Viranjeewa Weerakkody**  
 Maharagama  
 Sri Lanka  
 04. 02. 02

# **The Four Noble Truths**

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato  
Sammā Sambuddhassa

**Catu saccham pakasetvā catu maggaphāle subhé,  
Patithapetvā samsarā yo tāresi bahujjane.**

**Tham locanatham sugatam dhammanca tena desitam.  
Sanghanca orasam tassa abhivandami sadaram**

Omniscient, all - compassionate, arhat, our Lord, Samma Sambuddha by enthusiastic determination for so long a period as many millenia of aeons practised all pre - requisites of Buddhahood' and in so doing Lord fathomed the deepest and profound FNTs which made him the Buddha and came to know that It is not by perceiving this four noble truths that beings, migrators in the ocean of samsāra are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, overwhelmed infinite number of times by death, oldage, despair and lamentation while tossing about in samsāra without any help, and at times reaching the bottom - most dungeons of the four hells. The advent of the all - compassionate supreme Buddha has for its reason the enunciation of the Four Noble Truths in order that the beings floundering on the muddy land of samsāra might be saved of the bonds thereof and be placed in the safe heaven of Nirvana.

Lord Buddha having attained Buddhahood, spending seven weeks thereafter, visited Isipatana, Benares, by the invitation of the Brahma and preached the first sermon, the Four Noble truths to the five ascetics including gods and Brahmas assembled there who descended from celestial abodes. It is reiterated that the only singular, sure way available to beings who wander in the cycle of existence is the comprehending appropriately the Four Noble Truths. Four Noble truths is exclusively the teaching of the Buddhas. The answer that the Buddha gave to those who said that one can reach Nirvana without the understanding of the four noble truths is :-

**“seyyathāpi bhikkave, yo evam vadeyya, aham khadira-pattānam vā salalapattānam vā āmalaka Pattānam vā putam karitvā udakam vā tālapattam vā āharissāmi ti netam thānam vijjati. Evameva kho bhikkhave; yo evam vadeyya, aham kō dukkham ariyasaccam yathābhūtam anabhisamecca dukkha samudayam ariyasaccam yathābhūtam anabhisamecca dukkha nirodham ariyasaccam yathābhūtam anabhisamecca dukkha nirodhagāmini patipadam ariyasaccam yathābhūtam anabhisamecca dukkhassantam karissāmi ki ti netam thanam vijjati.”**

‘As someone's proposition that he could bring water in a corn made of kihiri leaves, asoka leaves, Nelli leaves or palm leaves, cannot be accomplished; so is the statement of a person saying that he would transcend suffering without comprehending the truth of suffering, cause of suffering, end of suffering and path leading to the end of suffering.’

### **Importance of Realising the Four Noble Truths.**

By sotapanna (stream entry), sakkadāgāmi (once re-turner) Anāgāmi (never returner), Arhat (Sainthood), Pasebudu

(silent Buddhahood) and Sammasambuddha, one means and refers to the depth of comprehension of the four noble truths at each of these stages. When a person comprehends the four noble truths for the very first time, ipso facto, the person rises above mundane sphere and hence is known as one of the Arya (noble) disciples of the Buddha. He is thus known as a sotappana.

By virtue of the glimpse of the true vision which the sotāppana has kenned, he is not liable to be born in the four purgatories. Although he is destined to be born in the samsara (metempsychosis), he would only be born, if at all he is going to be born, only seven times. Within the seven births or during the cause of seven births he would, definitely, reach Nirvana attaining perfect sainthood (Arhatship). Little indeed is the suffering a sotappana has to undergo in the lines of birth, old age, death, despair and lamentation.

**Future is indefinite.** It can never be quantified by days or months, years or even by aeons. There's no defining limit to it. So also, there's no limit to the number of times a person coming to being or dying, which is unquantifiable. Neither is there any limit to the number of times one may be born in a purgatory. Therefore the amount of suffering endured by a traveller on the desert of samsara is massive. When compared with the amount of suffering confronted by a sotapanna for seven births with that of the worn - out lot of suffering is really so small.

Once (the Lord) took some soil onto one of his toe-nails and addressed the disciples: **monks!, said he, "what is huge, O! monks! the soil on my toe - nail or soil on this earth?"** The monks replied that the soil on the toe - nail of the blessed - one was far, far smaller in amount and correspondingly the soil on earth was massive. The soil on the blessed one's toe - nail was not even

one thousandth, nor one - hundredth thousandth, nor yet ten hundredth - thousandth parts! On hearing the judgement of the disciples, the blessed one spoke thus:-

**“Evameva kho bhikkhave! ariyasāvakassa ditthi sampannassa Puggalassa abhisametāvino etadeva bahutaram dukkham yadidaṃ parikkhinam papiyādinnaṃ appamattakaṃ avasittham neva stimaṃ kalam upeti, na sahaṣsimam kalam upeti, na satasahaṣsimam kalam upeti, purimam dukkhakkhandam parikkhinam pariyaḍinnaṃ upanidhāya yadidaṃ sattakkahattuparamatā”**

“Monks! the amount of sorrow and suffering (dukkha) obliterated by the sotappana is immense, the residual dukka is absolutely little. This is not one - hundredths, one thousands nor one millionth part of the obliterated dukka.” (in other words, the obliterated dukka is as vast as the amount of soil on earth.)

In **Abhisamaya Sāmyutta** and **Sacca Sāmyutta** this fact has been expatiated by using numerous parables. The realisation of the four noble truths is so vital in that it conferreth on the realiser the freedom ineffable: not in the human realm, nor in the deities' realms, nor in the realm of the Brahma gods anything as valuable as the wisdom that comprehends the de facto status quo of the universe. As such, it is said:-

**“phatavyā ekarajjena saggassa gamanena vā  
sabbalokādhipaticcena sotāpatti phalaṃ varam.”**

“More than becomming the emperor of the world, than birth in heaven, more than becomming the emperor of the universe is the fruit of a stream winner. Stream entry is the status acquired by realising the FNTs.”



If one acquires wisdom that assimilates the four noble truths, there is no profit as great as that. People who lived during the time of the Buddha or around that time attained Nirvana (arahatship) by absorbing the four noble truths and put an end to their suffering thereof. Most of them wherefore resolved on becoming monks after renouncing huge treasures they owned and also their sons and wives who were the most precious for them. Those who live today, both laity and priests, in spite of trying to understand the Four noble truths, deluded by ignorance and under the sway of craving, try to be rich and wealthy surpassing one another. Nay, they even think of the four noble truths. Hence, those of today, do not obtain the essence that is in the whole edifice of Buddhism. Priests, if not the laity, must put forth effort to realise the four noble truths. It is for the purpose of realising the four noble truths that one goes from home to homelessness. Hence the Buddha has said :-

**“yehi keci bhikkhave! Atheethamadhanam kulaputtā sammā agāasmā Anagāriyaṃ pabbajinsu. Sabbe te catunnam ariyasaccanam yathabhutam abhisamayāya. Ye hi pi keci bhikkhave! Anāgathamadhanam kulaputtā sammā agāasmā anāgariyaṃ pabbajissanti, sabbe te catuñnam ariyasaccanam yathabhutam abhisamayāya. Yé hi pi keci bhikkhave! Etarahi kulaputta sammā agāasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbhajanti sabbe te catuñnam ariyasaccanam yathabhutam abhisamayaya.”**

“Monks! if a noble son went from home to homelessness, he had done so in order to grasp the four noble truths. So also, Monks! if in the future, a noble son, likewise, goes from home to homelessness, he too does so for the purpose of realising the four noble truths accordingly. For a noble son who does so now, the same can be said of him.”

In consonance of the Buddha's, the all-honored one's opinion, those who have as yet not grasped the four noble truths

should, by considering it to be of the utmost importance, put forth effort accordingly to ken the four noble truths. Wherefore, the all - compassionate one, once addressed the Bhikkus; what should be done? O! Bhikkus if your head or worn - clothing caught fire? To what should be given the foremost consideration? Then the Bhikkus replied, “Lord! when head or worn clothing catches fire, one must foremostly consider putting the fire off.” To which the blessed one rejoined, “As you should not be indifferent regarding the head or the worn - clothing so you should put your shoulders to the wheel drive forth effort with indefatigable zeal and concentration put to realize the four noble truths.”

**“ Ādittam bhikkhave! chelam vā sisam vā, ajkdhupekkhitva, amanasikarivā anabhiśāmetānam catunnuam ariyāsaccānam yathābutam abhisamayāya, adhimatthō candoca vā yā moca, ussā hoca, ussolhica appativā nica śāṭṭica, sampapannanca karaniyam”**

when worn - clothing or head catches fire, what will at most befall a person is death. From only a once existed fire one would not embrace death seven, eight or twelve times. But, on the other hand, for one who has not realised the four noble truths, deaths that would befall him in samsara (wheel of births and death, metempsychosis) could be immense as to be rendered uncountable. Inasmuch as one realises the four noble truths by only dying once, the innumerable deaths, that would come to him Sansara would cease. In other words, the one would be freed, released from recurrent wandering in wheels of birth and death. It is for this very reason that the blessed one had said that even when one's head or worn - clothing is aflame, still, one should strive to grasp the four noble truths.

One day, the blessed one addressed his community of disciples thus. “O! Bhikkus! if a person goes to another person

who has a hundred - year life - span and tells him that every day whenever I come to you, you will be pierced hundred times with a pointed iron staff in the morning, evening and at night respectively for continuous hundred years. So much so that at the end of the hundredth year, you shall realise the four noble truths, then the victim (of the pointed iron staff) should agree and give his consent. Why should the victim give assent? In samsara which is beginningless and end-less each and every one has received innumerable piercings from pointed iron - staffs, maces, swords and daggers. Yet I would not emphasize that anyone should grasp the four noble truths by suffering. Amidst happiness and well - being should you consume the four noble truths.”

**“ye hi keci bhikkhavé! anukampeyyātha. Yeca sotabbam maññeyyūṃ, mittā vā amaccā vā nāti vā sālōhitā vā, te vo bhikkhave catuññam ariyasaccanīm yathā bhūtaṃ abhisamayāya samādapetabbā nivesetabbā satipattha petabbā.”**

If deliberation and effort to conceive the FNTs are worth hundreds and thousands of times more than that for nourishing the body, fostering the family, enjoying sensual pleasures, effort to become richer, famous and acquiring praise, if otherwise the all - honoured, wisest, best master, Lord Buddha would not have extolled and thoroughly advised to work with indefatigable zeal to comprehend the FNTs. It (FNTs.) has thus been discoursed since it is pivotal and a *sine qua non* of the canker - free state of Nirvana. Therefore, everyone, according to one's capability, mayest endeavor to imbibe the truths herein mentioned! Once again Buddha addressed his disciples:

“Bhikkus! if you have sympathy towards someone, be they your friends, neighbours or kith and kin, and if they have

high regard for your advice, then cause them, by dint of hard work, to fathom the FNTs appropriately.”

Thus according to the words of the blessed one, may you not only strive to realise the FNTs yourselves but also cause your compeers to comprehend the FNTs. In this world, there abound and galore the people who crave for sensual pleasures without knowing the himalayan value and profit that accrues on the one who grasps the FNTs. By instilling in the minds of one's compeers the significance of comprehending FNTs is a help rendered value whereof is immeasurable by any standards. Without the help of a teacher or expert, only Buddhas and silent Buddhas, who have completed prerequisites of enlightenment, can by their own wisdom grasp the FNTs. Outside the category of Buddhas and silent Buddhas, nobody else, howsoever clever he or she may be, can by their own sagacity, realize the FNTs. Therefore in times devoid of buddhas even the word FNTs cannot be heard, nay anybody coming to know of it. One can hear the word FNTs only in times wherein Buddhas flourish. In these times where we exist is a time wherein we can hear and know the FNTs. It is wholly profitless and despicable that, having been born a human, that time should be wasted on sensual pleasures which even beasts indulge in. Albeit acquiring various stages of spiritual accomplishment by mastering the FNTs by reading books of Dhamma like this, one can gain a fair knowledge of the FNTs. This would amount later to gaining the experiential knowledge of the FNTs and subsequent attaining of ignorance free Nirvana, the summum bonum. Wherefore, may this be read by all!

**Imasmimyeva vyāmatte kalebare sasaññimhi samanake lokanca paññāpemi lokasamudayanca lokanirodh - anca, lokanirodhagāminca patipadam.”**

“This statement is true. His statement is true;” the word “true” is ascribed to sentences such as above that accordingly perceive something in this world. But FNTs. does not mention anything that is perceived by the senses in this world. Nevertheless, it depicts four ultimate aspects of the world that exist naturally. FNTs. will have to be understood with penetrative insight, by removing the veil of ordinary, banal understanding. Moreover, FNTs. are not something beyond us. they are but part and parcel of us, humans. Thatagata has uttered thus to the divine prince Rohitassa:-

“In this body of about a fathom, equipped with sensations and mind there is the world, its origin, cessation and the way leading thereto.” Here, by words such as “origin,” cessation,” it was the FNTs that were affirmed.

Though the FNTs seems manifest visibly closer to us, yet to find it out and comprehend it in all its dimensions is absolutely formidable. That this fact is so, the blessed one showed Ven. Ananda by a parable. Once, in Vesali, while going his begging round with alms - bowl in hand, Ven. Ananda saw the Lichavi Princesses practising arrow - targeting and he (Ven. Ananda) specially noted how princesses shot forth arrows so accurately to pass through a key - hole. When Ven. Ananda got back to the temple, he made known to the blessed one this fact.

Thereat, the lord said, Ananda! of targeting an arrow through a key - hole and shooting with a horse - skin torn - into - seven to a corner of a piece of horse - skin target 210 feet away; which task is more difficult and daunting? Then Ananda said, “Lord, Blessed One! Shooting with the torn - into - seven horse skin to the corner of a piece of horse - skin is more difficult. Whereupon the blessed one reacted, “Ananda! Comprehension of Dukkha, cause of Dukkha, sloughing of Dukkha and the way

thereto (FNTs) is even harder than shooting a torn - into - seven horse skin to a the piece of horse skin.” Thus, according to this example one should learn the duanting nature of gaining a penetrative understanding of the FNTs.”

The word “FNT discourse” is applied to those words of the Buddhas, aimed at making others discern the FNTs, that are qualified by “paramatte” alias the dhamma of FNTs. The word “Dhamma” has manifold connotations. At some places the word dhamma is substituted for the word “Désana (discourse)”. Therefore the facts can get confused by considering “FNT dhamma” and “FNTs discourse” to be the same. To avert this, it is essential, first of all, to consider “FNT dhamma” to be one and “FNT discourse” another. If the FNTs are expounded in the perfect way possible, it would consists of innumerable words and meticulous dhamma analyses and thus would be a very long discourse. That in the words of the Buddha himself:-

**“Dukkham ariya saccanti bhikkhave! Mayā paññattam  
tatha aparimānā vannā aparimānā, vyanjanā aparimānā  
sāmkāsanā.”**

## **The Two Modes of the Discourse.**

When the Buddha imparts knowledge of the FNTs to anyone, depending on the circumstances, he uses two modes of discourse or, to be meticulous, “sermons.” To wit, conventional or normal sermon and sā mukānsika sermon, sermons preached in general dhamma discussion times and those that contained in the books (Tripitaka) are conventional or normal sermons.

When a person who has completed paramis (perfections) that envisages him to attain enlightenment comes to the Bud-

dha for edification, he (the Buddha) first preaches on liberality, good ways of living (sila) ..... etc., thereby calming and stilling the mind of the listener and finally elaborates on the FNTs. When a listener concentrates his mind while hearing a sermon such as this, if he has completed the perfections, he will reach any of the four stages of sainthood, namely, Sotappana, Sakkadāgami, Anāgāmi and Arhatship. It is such a sermon as this that is pointed towards the FNTs. that is denoted by the term “**Sāmukānsika sermon.**”

Among the Buddha's types of sermons, the “sāmukānsika sermon” is held in the supreme status. It is a long sermon comprising millions of words. Such a large number of words cannot, except by the Buddha, be uttered by any other being. Buddha is a miraculous personage; his sermons and discourses are phenomenal and stupendous. As the Buddha can speak swiftly, naturally his discourses are very long. After having partaken of liberally given food, his sermon to the giver, when discoursed a little descriptively, is as same as the length of Majjima Nikaya (MNS or Dhīga Nikaya (DN). His sermons to those visiting the temple in the evening are as massive as both Aṅguttara and Sāmyutta Nikayas (AN and SN) For one who listens to the long sāmukānsika mode of discourse, edification and gladdening of mind occur due to truth been imbibed but, no - body remembers it, to repeat later, exactly in the sequence in which the Buddha sermoned. For which reason this type of discourse is not available or found in any of the books. This type of sermon is indulged in only by the Buddha. Just because in the time duration of usually a one word, lot of words are uttered in quick succession like a river downpouring from a mountain top, no body gets strayed from the truth of the discourse. One who gives ear to every word of this type of sermon imbibes the truth therein. This

is another phenomenal and astonishing aspects of the *sāmukansika* sermon.

The easiest way for assimilating the FNTs is listening to the *sāmukansika* sermon of a Buddha. It is because of this (*sāmukansikā désana*) that Buddhists have got used to wish to be born while a Buddha is living and the opportunity to hear his discourse.

For the Buddhist existing at present, one fact should be disclosed, although it is not within the purview of *Arya sacca* (Noble Truths).

Present - day Buddhists intend achieving Nirvana by listening to dhamma in the dispensation of the Buddha Metteyya only by constructing temples, dagobas, rest - houses for monks, ponds, wells, by keeping to precepts and acts of liberality. These merits may enable a Buddhist to see the Buddha Metteyya, and perhaps to listen to his dhamma sermons but to achieve Nirvana, these acts of merit are insufficient. Everyone, merely by seeing a Buddha and hearkenning unto a dhamma discussion of his, cannot attain Nirvana. It is, however, true that lot of beings while listening to Buddha Dharma instantly attained such states of sainthood as *Sotāpanna*. Nevertheless, just as the lotus whose blossoming is not in keeping with its growth does not get the warmth of the sun's rays, even so are the people.

Who lack *pāramis* (perfections) though got the opportunity of hearing a Buddha's sermon would not attain to any of the four sublime states such as *Sotāpanna*, *Sakādagāmi*, *Anagāmi* and *Arhat*. To rise to any of the sublime states while listening to a Buddha's discourse, one must have his *pāramis* complete.

To the bird that is desirous of tasting the fruit hanging heavy from a tree it must have a pair of wings to fly thereto and



a sharp beak to chew off the fruit. A bird not possessing either wings or a beak cannot for aye taste the fruit. In a similar fashion, one desirous of acquiring the liberation of Nirvana should have a set of paramis driving him towards a Buddha who is like unto a tree bearing the nectar of Nirvana and another set of pāramis like the “beak” in the case of the bird to taste the flavor of Nirvanic bliss.

Meritorious deeds such as acts of liberality, renouncing worldly riches performed by Buddhists, all the world over, at this time of day, would, indubitably, cause them to be born in blissful, heavenly realms and so also would cause their evasion from dark dungeons in hells. If a certain person follows a sinful way of existence, being averse to good ethical paths that leadeth unto great bliss, such a one will, after death, be born into a hellish existence and bound to experience immense suffering and to all intents and purposes shall not even come to hear of Buddhas and their dispensation even though several Buddhas come into being and pass away. If one is born into a blissful state (gods and brahma gods) as a result of his / her rightful conduct, such a one shall come to know the arising of a Buddha, to get a glimpse of him and to hear his sermons. Thus sloughing of worldly riches is a very chief factor for coming one to see a Buddha and to listen to his expounding dhamma. Charitable acts are like the pair of wings of the aforementioned bird that helps it to reach the fruit laden tree. By completion of one set of paramis akin to the bird's wings, one can only see the Buddha but it (performance of charitable deeds) would not envisage him/her to consummate the dhamma and to attain to one of the four sublime states. Why is this so? There is a portion in the Buddhas' dharma or doctrine, just as the FNTs, that is very deep and profound. This can be grasped by those, who have in their previous lives, that

had learnt divisions of being (ontological analysis) and analyses of the thought process .....etc and so have a high degree of wisdom. Those who have no elevated wisdom arising from study of the Buddha's profound dharma would not comprehend dharma here and now and thus would not soar onto world - transcending (sublime) states. In order to realise the (Buddha's) doctrine from the disclosure of a future Buddha one must in one's present and lives to come must and should have to accomplish the task of delving somewhat, at least, in the profound dhamma (Abidhamma) of the Buddha as it is known at present. Those who see the Buddha but do not realise the dharma (by attaining to sublime states) are like birds that have wings to reach the tree but whose beaks are not developed enough to taste the fruit. It should now be amply clear that why some don't transcend the world even after listening to a Buddha's dharma discussions.

King of Kosala and his queen consort, Mallika, were contemporaries and two among the chief benefactors of the Buddha. They had accrued enough merits as to see the Buddha and hear his words of dharma. Buddha, during his ministry of 45 years, sojourned most of the time in Kosala within the bounds of the king of Kosala. King of Kosala was one among the most frequented lay disciples of the Buddha. He also caused to be built a lodging for the Buddha and the Bhikku community. Not only did he hear most of the Buddha's sermons but also there are extensive portions of dhamma that Buddha especially targeted towards him. Although he was so privileged, yet, he could not come to any of the four sublime stages. He died as a mundane human, so to be said.

Bhikku named Sunakkata shared the same fate. For several years, he dwelt ministering unto Buddha and closely

associating him. But as he had not the requisite wisdom (prañña pāramitā), even after listening to more than hundred sermons from the Buddha himself, he could not realise the FNTs. Here and now, hence, sunakkhatta died as a mundane person. Therefore let those who wish to meet a Buddha in the future and realise truth be not content solely by liberality (dāna) and discipline (sīla) but shall develop the needed wisdom (<sup>1</sup> Arya ñāna) as well. Wisdom required for proper understanding of the dharma can be gained only by studying and reflecting on the five skandas, twelve āyatana, eighteen dhātus twenty two Indriyas, FNTs and dependent origination..... etc. To garner knowledge about these it would be good to read <sup>2</sup> Abhidharmartha Sangraha. Some, owing to their being non - proficient in the dharma, say, “There is no need of abhidharma, being morally discipline is enough.” Let nobody be deluded by these words of the foolish people.

The Kobra king Erakapatta and Kapila the Fish, who were contemporaries of the Buddha, developed wisdom but did not indulge in the acts of charity. These two, during the period of the Buddha Kāshyapa, had reached the extremity in the knowledge of dharma. As they had failed in the acts of charity, they were in hell and therefore they could not yield any benefit from the dispensation of the Buddha Gautama. Dhamma (doctrine of the Buddhas) can only be imbibed by those who have been born in pleasurable realms (kāma loka)<sup>3</sup> tri - causally (trihétuka pratisandhi). As the facts are such, those that are

- 
1. Requisite wisdom = prañña pāramitā = Arya nanna = arya sacca = Abidharma
  2. Another work by the author of this work.
  3. Birth consciousness comprising pleasure, lack of false view and spontaneity. This is purely a topic that pertains to Abidhamma studies. One must study Abidhamma in order to fully appreciate this.

desirous of attaining Nirvana under guidance of a future Buddha need to fulfil the aforementioned two types of pāramitās.

As wings are for birds, as legs are for humans, to meet a Buddha and thus to attain Nirvana there are certain meritorious deeds that one should engage in, to wit, “charana.” The Aryan (noble) wisdom impregnated in knowledge of, for eg., the five aggregates..... etc is known as “Vidya.” In so far as the ten perfections (pāramitas) of a Buddha is concerned, prajñā pāramitā belongs to “Vidya” and the rest to “charanā.” In order to partake of the nectar of Nirvana, one must complete “Vidyā and Charana” so, it is set forth by ancient teachers:

**“Charanam pādapakkam ca - vijjam tunda samam samam**

**Sampūretvāna pakkheyum - bhujitum amatam rasam.”**

Charana pāramitās akin to legs and wings, vidya paramitās akin to a beak, by completing these one can assuredly partake of the nectar of Nirvana.

## **Differenciation of paramārtha and Prajnapti**

It was mentioned earlier that the FNTs belongs to that portion of dharma known as paramārtha. In order to grasp the FNTs, based on paramārtha, easily, firstly, paramārtha should be arrested. Therefore, it would be well to survey what paramārtha is?

There exists in this world things (animate and inanimate) that manifest themselves on account of smaller elements being put together, being conditioned by a multiplicity of other factors and conceptual thinking. Such things as these

that do not exist in an ultimate sense are called “prajnapti.” Things that are said to exist in an ultimate sense are called “Paramartha.”

If a burnt fire brand is rotated fast, there appears a ring of fire. This ring of fire appears as a consequence of the speed of the brand. Anybody can easily understand that independent of the speed of rotation there leith no fire - ring. Morning - evening, midday - night, day, month are things that are conditioned. These are concepts that arise contingent upon movements of earth and sun and their relative positions in space. They are not things in themselves. It is amply evident to a clearly thinking individual that they are merely conceptual and that there is no essence in them. The likes of the fire - ring and morning - evening are projections of other objects and are observed thereof.

There are great many things, that are nothing in themselves, but, manifest when other objects are present appropriately. One such object or thing is the tower. Tower is an object of great height if one analyses a tower, it will be seen to consist of stones and cement. If stones and cement are separated, there would be a heap of stones and a heap of cement. So, the tower disappears. The reason for the disappearance of the tower is that apart from stones and cement there isn't a thing called the “tower.” If stones and cement are assembled in order that they rise, again the tower would surely appear and, subsequently, if you separate the stones and cement, as ealier, the tower would undoubtedly disappear.

Even a house is certainly a phenomenon conditioned by so many other things that are used in its building. The house disappears if the elements that went to its building such as tiles, blocks, wood and cement are separated. The objects that comes

to nothing when analysed as above, and those that are a projection of several other adjuncts are the things that are non - ultimate, and conceptual.

Gods, humans, elephants, horses and cows and chair, table, cups, clothes, trees, the animate and inanimate objects such as these are considered by the ordinary people as things in the real. But a wise man's reflection can show that all the above mentioned categories can be analysed in exactly the same way that we analysed the "tower" above. None of these just - mentioned things are "paramārtha."

This analysis is the best way of finding out whether or not a thing (dharma) is categorised as "paramārtha." "Paramārtha" should be found by dividing or reducing subjects in as much as further division is impossible. For eg: one such analysis is shown in great detail.

A cloth is a piece of entity that is considered as existent by ordinary worldlings. Discern what the cloth consists of while analysing it. Then one would find a concatenation of threads that spread, warp and woof, comprising the cloth. There after, cogitate whether cloth is actually the threads. Thence, one would discern that cloth is not threads nor threads the cloth. Cloths is merely a projection of the threads. Once having seen that there is no cloth actually, proceed to analyse the thread. This would reveal the thread to be of clumps of cotton wool. At this point, it would be seen that in actuality there is no thread but cotton fibres and moreover, threads are but a projection of cotton fibres. Now, take a cotton fibre and analyse it as well. Upon careful analysis one would find, in the cotton fibre, presence of minute clumps of matter. It is not easy to find these. The minutest part of the fibre is termed "rūpa kalāpa" (clump of matter). A small fibre manifests only when millions of "rūpa

kalāpa” aggregates. Even the rūpa kalāpa is not primordial and singular. It, too, consists of the qualities of hardness (prūṭuvi), adhesiveness (āpo), fire or heat (Théjo), wind or motion (vāyō), color, smell, taste and juicy or exuding fluidity (ojāva). These are not dividable or analysable any further. They are paramārtha and truly existent. The paramārtha dharma of the aforementioned cloth are the eight rūpas or forms. This is the way in which objects are analysed. Those who have not learned the paramārtha dharma can, in no manner, analyse and thus find the paramārtha as just mentioned. None the less anybody can cognize that most of the things we come across are, by way of paramartha, non-existent.

To be enabled to think and reflect entities as paramārtha dharma, one must needs possess a general overview of it from a teacher, an expert of Abhidharma. If hellish realms (apāya), human realm, Heavenly realms and realms of Brahma gods are meticulously analysed, in both animate and inanimate things, it would be found that there are eighty two paramārtha dharmas. To wit, mind, fifty-two mental-formations (cetasika), twenty eight forms and Nirvana. Except these eighty two, there is no object, in all the universe over, that exists in the actual, ultimate sense. The world is formed of the eighty one paramārthas with the exemption of Nirvana. Paramārthas cannot be known by the ordinary mind as they are encumbered by prajñapti. When prajñaptis are analysed and finely experimented by the mental ken, paramartha that have evaded understanding will come to light.

It is only by delving deep in the profound discourse of the Buddha that paramārtha dharma can be apprehended. Merely by discovering the eighty two paramartha, FNTs can never be known. To grasp the FNTs one must delve even deeper in the field of paramartha dharma.

## FNTs

Suffering, cause of suffering, removal of suffering (Nirvana) and the way there-to are not only for humans but gods in heavenly realms as well. If it is asked from a Buddhist whether he knows the FNTs, One would be met with the spontaneous reply “Yes.” such a reply is elicited owing to a misunderstanding, harbouring of a false notion of it by majority of the Buddhists. “Having a false notion” means “having no knowledge of” the FNTs. The world is so relative that what is good for one, is deemed bad by another and what is bad by one, is deemed good by another. At times what one and the same person says “good”. At times one and the same person says “good” what he earlier termed bad” and vice versa.

What for one a cause for happiness, for another it is a cause for suffering and vice versa. One and the same person who at one time said that something had been a cause of happiness, the very person later says the same to be a cause of sorrow and suffering and vice versa. What all this shows is that the ordinary people have understood the FNTs the sole truth with a false colouring. Buddha, having transcended suffering and attained ultimate happiness, uttered the FNTs to both humans and gods who have misunderstood and misconstrued it.

Below is how the Buddha typified the veracity of the FNTs.

**“Cattārimāṇi bhikkhave! Ariyasaccāni. Katāmaṇi cattari? Dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, dukkha samudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, dukkha nirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, dukkha nirodha gāmini patipadā ariyasaccaṃ.”**



Bhikkus, these four truths belong to Arya (highest) sacca (truth). What are the four? The fact of suffering, the arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way thereto.

Truth is twofold. Paṛyāya and Nispaṛyāya. Paṛyāya is the conventional truth. Things that are not paramartha, non-existent in the ultimate sense such as god, human, elephant, horse, tree, shrubs and house are not present in the actual sense (prajñāpti) but they are felt manifest to the lay - intellects as things in themselves. These objects, that are caught hold of by humankind, are used for conventional purposes. These are so, in so far as the level of human intellect is concerned, and is therefore Known as **paṛyāya truth**. This truth which becomes untrue when psychically analysed is what (ordinary) lay - people apprehend as "truth."

What becomes truer and truer upon mental analysis, that does not become untrue, what is perceived by the Buddha in contrast to lay vision, the FNTs, which results from the supreme vision of the Buddhas is known as Arya (Nispaṛyāya) Sathya. This means that "the truth brought forth by Buddhas", for "Arya" is one of the names of the thatāgata (Buddha).

**"sadevake lōke samārake sabrahkmake ṣassamana brahmaniyaṃ pajāya sadeva manussāya thatāgatō ariyo. Thasmā ariyasaccāni vuccanti"**

"Among the denizens of this world comprising devas (gods), maras (evil spirits), Brahma gods and humans, thatāgata is known as "Arya." Wherefore truth perceived and brought forward by him is known as Arya Sathya" (truth). Because of the fact that only the Buddhas come to know of FNTs, it is also called Arya Sathya.

"Bhikkus! Since this FNTs have been accordingly grasped by the thatāgata, Samma Sambuddha, he is called "Arya" so

said the Buddha.” Moreover, as by comprehending FNTs, one becomes “Arya”. These are termed “Arya Sathya.”

The conventional truth or pañyāya which is asserted as man, god, woman, house and cloth when get analysed in accordance with paramārtha, become falsified. Even paramārtha being analysed by Arya Sathya becomes insubstantial. As to how conventional truth becomes untenable in paramartha, one can understand by reading the above mentioned “prajñāpti and paramārtha.” Below is how paramārtha gets untenable when interpreted in the light of Arya Sathya.

It is true according to paramārtha when we say that meritorious action produces wholesome results whilst demeritorious action produces unwholesome results. None the less, in keeping with Arya Sacca the results of both meritorious and demeritorious actions are tainted with suffering and hence unwholesome. Thus one can see that the paramartha affirmation “meritorious action produces wholesome results” becomes rather insubstantiated in the Arya Sathya, and this is how paramārtha sathya is attenuated, at least, sometimes.

Never, in any way, can Arya Sathya be made untenable. If in consonance with Arya Sathya, something is termed “suffering,” it is “suff<sup>r</sup>ring” and nothing else. And so are with the cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way leading thereto. Therefore, Buddha has placed firm expression on the FNTs as:-

**“Chāttarimāni bhikkhave Tathāni honti avitathani anannathani. Kathamāni chatthāri? Idamdukkhanti bhikkhavé? Tathametam, avithathametam, anannathametam, ayañ dukkha samudhayōti thathametam, avitathmetāñ, anannatametam, ayañ dukkha nirodhoti tathametam, avithathametam, anannatametam. Ayañ dukkha nirodha gāmini patipadāti tatametam, avitathametam, anannatametam.”**

“Bhikkhus! These four things are certainly true. They are not lies. There's no alternative to them. What four things? Bhikkhus! If as suffering I have shown something, it is such and not other-wise. It is not lies nor has it any alternative. (same for cause for suffering, cessation of suffering and the way leading thereto).

As has been preached so many times and in so many ways, by the Thatagata, they (FNTs) are timeless and placeless. They preserve their status ad infinitum and they become not - false in anyway and manifest as Dukkha or suffering and changes not thereof. Verily owing to these reasons also they are known or addressed as the “Arya sacca.”

Never can anyone be found in the three worlds (human, deva and Brahma) who can dismiss these FNTs and introduce, in there stead, another four. To this fact, also Tathagata gave stentorian expression;

**“Dukkham ko bhikkhu! mayā pathamam ariya saccam desitam. Thathā nam dhārēhi. Yo hi kochi bhikkhu! samanovā brāhmanovā evam vadeiya. Netham dukkham pathaman ariya saccan paccakkāya aññam dukkham pathamam ariya saccam pannapéssāmeeti nétam tānam vijjati.”**

“Bhikkhus! By me was discoursed the first Arya sacca Stipulated as Dukkha.<sup>4</sup> Know it as it is. If another sramana<sup>5</sup> or Bhrahmana were to say that what the blessed one has said as the first noble truth is not “suffering” and he is able to enunciate another noble truth; to say such and able to do so, no sramana has capability nor reason to do so.” Thus, let ye know that the FNTs declared by the Thatagata, in anyway and by anybody, can never be falsified or disproved.

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4. Acetic, here one belonging to another religious denomination.
  5. Suffering, impermanence, death, lamentation, despair and include all other things that cause physical or mental suffering

## The Fact Of Suffuring

Lord Buddha, being supremely consummate in the art of discourse, could able to preach the same point by hundreds and thousands of diverse ways. As when one mouths a sermon in a particular way, not all would understand it in that way; to alleviate this mal - effect. Buddha admonished and edified various individuals in keeping with their temperaments and circumstances. Therefore it can reasonably be inferred that discourses attending to FNTs galore. Thereon the FNTs has been sermonised in multifarious lines. In one of those discourses, Dukkha has been delineated thus:

**“Katamanca bhikkhave! dukkham ariya saccam? pancupādānakkhandā tissa vacanīyam seyyatthidam? rūpupādānakkhando, vedanupādānakkhando, sannupādānakkhando, sankhārūpādānakkhomdo, vinnūpādānakkhando idam vuccati bhikkhave! dukkham ariyasaccam.”**

Bhikkhus! what is the noble truth of suffering? If asked thus, the reply must be the five aggregates. What are these five aggregates? Corporeality, feeling sensation, mental formations and consciousness. Bhikkhus! this is called the noble truth of suffering.

In this discourse, the five aggregates are mentioned as the noble truth of suffering. If it is questioned what is the noble truth of suffering, the answer should be the five aggregates.

## **Material form or corporeality (Rupa)**

By rūpa is meant a composite, substantial (paramārtha) entity, fine and subtle, that changes from one state to another or ceases to exist due to a variety of reasons such as changes in temperature and rūpa is an admixture of four qualities known as Mahā Bhūta Rūpa. Namely, pathavi<sup>6</sup>, apo<sup>7</sup>, tejo<sup>8</sup>, and vāyo<sup>9</sup>. Thus has been said by the Buddha:

**“Katamanca bhikkhave rūpam? Cattāro mahā bhūta catunna mahā bhūtānam upādāya rūpam idam vuccati bhikkhave rūpam.”**

“Bhikkhus! what is this “rūpa?” The four Mahā Bhūta rūpa, things that arise from interaction, bonding or interpenetration of the above elemental properties”

Things (rupas) that appear vast like earth, trees, Mountains, rivers and oceans are called Mahā Bhūta. Furthermore, there are twenty four entities that arise by interpenetration of Mahā Bhūta rupa and which are an integral part of the things that have arisen by way of Mahā Bhūta rupa. These are therefore given the epithet Upadaya Rupa which, by number, is twenty four. So, there are the four Mahā Bhūta rūpas and the twenty four upadaya rupas: thus the entire rupas or corporeality consists of twenty eight substantial entities.

- 
6. Pathavi = the quality of extension (hardness or softness)
  7. Apo = the quality of cohesion (togetherness)
  8. Tejo = quality of heat (hot and cold)
  9. The element of motion (movement)

The more pathavi, the more hardness the object possesses. The less the pathavi, the softer the object is. Henceforth, it should be kept in mind that whenever reference is made to hardness or softness, it is to the degree of the presence of pathavi that is being spoken of.

When fluidity, cohesion or adhesiveness of an object is spoken of, it is to the degree of the presence of āpo that reference is made. Similarly it should be taken to heart that hotness or coldness of an object is the extent to which tejo is present in that particular object. When motion, bloatedness or smoothness of an object is referred to, it is to the extent of vayo that is conceptualised by means of words.

If there is any entity in the universe, it is but a compound of these four Maha Bhutas. These four rupas exist by interacting with each other. Always and in every thing the four exist together, even if one goes off, the other three cannot hold and the whole mass extinguishes. Albeit, in different entities the four are not found in exact balance. In things such as hair, wool, nails, teeth, skin and flesh, so also in stones, soil and trees the "pathavi" is present in a greater proportion than the other three. In water, oil and pulp, the "apō" is abundant than the other three. In fire, rays of sun and moon etc. tejo exceed the other three whilst in wind and smoke vāyō is plentiful than the other three.

The "world", as we call it, is there as long as the proper proportions of the four "mahā bhūtas" are maintained. Any alterations of their composition would destroy the world. Any increase in the composition of pathavi in the human body would make it like unto a log of wood. If vāyō increased while āpō decreased, the body would dissolve in air like a pile of dust. If pathavi decreased while āpō increased, the body would melt like a piece of ice. If tejo increased, the body would swell like

excrecences jutting out. Whatever be the entity or object, by disappearance of one, the other three also disintegrate making the object to dissociate or die.

## Twenty Four Upādāya Rūpa

### Prasāda Rūpa:-

**Chakshuprasāda, shotthraprasāda, gānaprasāda, Jihvaprasāda and kāyaprasāda.** These five form the totality of the Prāsadarūpa.

### Chakshuprasāda

By the sides of the pupil, in the outermost surface of the inner eye (retina), of the size of a head of a hair bug, there is such a minute globe like thing whose surface has a shining like a polished mirror. Just as much as objects in front of a mirror get reflected are seen in the mirror as they are, the objects within the ambit of this “shinning globule” get reflected <sup>10</sup>accurately on its shinning surface. Inasmuch as fire arises when the end of the matchstick slides on the side - surface so is consciousness when the reflections dawned on the shinning surface. This is what is meant by vision or seeing. The shinning surface in the eye that helps the eye - consciousness dawn, which is known as the chakshuprasada. By prasada it is meant the quality of “shinning.”

Shōthraprasāda, gānaprasāda, jivhaprasāda and kāyaprasāda should also be thought of just as chakshuprasāda having a certain “shinning” region whereby sensory stimuli are received and consequently the particular consciousness arise as the “act of knowing” the appropriate stimulus.

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10. Do not confuse this with the vision in the ultimate sense.

## Gocara Rupa

There are five gocara rupas known respectively as rūpa <sup>11</sup>, sound (shabda), smell (gandha), taste (rasa) contact (sparsha).

By rūpa is here stipulated the colours such as blue - yellow - red - white ....etc. By Rūpaskandha or materiality is understood all the aforementioned twenty eight rūpas while here rūpa is meant solely for colors that are herein stated. So also should it be sternly expressed that color or “warna” is only one out of the twenty eight rūpas, which is visible. The other twenty seven rupas are invisible.

Sound or “shabda” is as we all know, the result begotten when two objects clash; voices, siren voices result from clash of atmospheric gases on some hard or soft object, “Gandha” or smell (good or bad) refers to chemicals emanating from so varied a number of objects as rotten, decomposing substances, perfumes, certain gases .....etc. “Rasa” or taste points to some qualities present in substances such as fruits and vegetables. These qualities are sweetness, bitterness, saltiness and sourness. These qualities are dependant upon the chemical composition of the substance. By contact or sparsha is designated certain qualities that one feel, as for instance, smoothness, raucousness, weight or lightness ..... etc. Although in systematising Gocara rupa, “sparsha” is taken as a separate type of rūpa, in reality, this isn't the real state of it. “Sparsha” is also used to designate the four Mahabhuta rūpas. In fact, “sparsha” is nothing but an alternative name for Mahabhūta rūpas.

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11. Here the two meanings attached to rūpa in pali and Sanskrit literature should be distinguished. When generally we speak of rūpa, it is for the entire materiality, but here it is for one aspect of materiality that is known as colours.



Therefore, it should be reminded that although there are five gocara rūpas yet in number {numerically} there are only four Gocara rūpas.

### **Bhāva Rūpa.**

Bhāva Rūpa is two fold. To wit, śthṛī (female) bhāva rūpa and puruṣa (male) bhāva rūpa. As regards the bodies of all animate things, they (bodies) are formed by interpenetration of the Maḥa bhūtas. On this account, it can be emphasized, both of male and female bodies that they are formed by the same four Maḥa bhūta rūpā in somewhat, nearly equal amounts or bulks. Though this is quite true, as it were, yet male and female bodies are fundamentally contrasting and anomalous. This contrast is not only limited to specific spots in the two bodies but also pervade throughout the bodies. Neither an organ, nor any tissues in the two bodies are alike. Why are the two bodies, male and female, different when they have been formed from the same maḥa bhūta rūpas? Despite the fact that the two types of bodies have arisen from the same maḥa bhūta rūpas, the differentiation is effected by an admixture, an extra addition of another rūpa known as **Bhāva Rūpa**. When the Bhāva rūpa is Female (śthṛī) Maḥa bhūtas get altered in such a way so as to form a female body whilst, when the male (puruṣa) Bhāva rūpa intermixes with the Maḥa bhūtas, a male - body results. One might question, based on what this intermixing occurs. It by karma, one's own actions past and present, that this intermixing occurs? A detailed description of which is beyond the scope of this work). Bhāva rūpa disintegrates and disappears with the death of the individual. Bhāva rūpas are very subtle and smooth, hence they are not visible to the naked eye of an ordinary worldling.

## Heart Muscle (Haṛdayavastu rūpa)

In the human chest cavity, beneath the lungs there is an organ called heart the shape of which resembles that of a mango. Its size is nearly that of the fist of the individual concerned. Moreover, the size of the heart in animals bigger than the human is larger than the human heart while in animals smaller than humans, it is smaller in size to the human heart. In the doctrine of the twenty eight rupas, it is not this heart that it is concerned with. By “Hardayavastu rupa” what is referred to is a certain amount of<sup>12</sup> “ventricular blood”. In this ventricular blood is present a fine quality or substance which causes thoughts, such as when chakshupraśada is stimulated, to rise. It is this quality present in blood, helping thought currents, that is asserted as “Hardayavastu rūpa.”

## Jī vitaendriya Rūpa.

There are four factors that are instrumental in the production of rupa or materiality. They are karma, mind, season and food. The luminous flame of a lamp exists due the sustaining influence of oil that it has. When the oil is used up, there's no whatsoever energy that would cause the flame to exist further. Likewise the rūpas that are born consequent upon mind, season and food endure so long as these three factors hold fast. After the extinction of the factors, these (rūpas) have no capability of continuing any longer. It is like when a cause disintegrates, the effect too disintegrates. This fact can be grasped rather easily by considering what happens to the material elements (rūpas) that are born of food. When food is not eaten for sometime, the

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12. Here what is meant is that only a specific region of the ventricle of the heart and also blood flow that is associated with it.

body becomes fragile and faded. This happens due to the decrease of that part of material element derived from food which enlivens and animates the body. To cause the manifestation of these rūpas, food shall have to be taken once and once again. When the food is digested and assimilated, the material elements that are formed thereof also get carried off. The rūpas that come into being because of mind and season enjoy the same fate. But, the nature of rupas that come to be (result) from karma is entirely anomalous. "The karmaja rūpas" that exist in the body came into being as a consequence of karma performed in a previous life. This karma, which belongs to the past get dissipated as soon as they were performed. Non the less, rūpas formed by immaterial kamma are sustained through comparably long periods of time. To sustain these material elements, there is no neccessity to perform again the corresponding karma. There must be a special power for these karma generated rūpas to be sustained for so long a continuation. This special power is the "Jivitendriya Rūpa". It is by intermixation and penetration of the Jīvitendriya rūpa with karmaja rūpa that it confers a prolonged life - span for karmaja rūpa. This means to say that Jīvitaendriya rūpa is also born of previous kamma and its chief motivating factor of existence is to control the karmaja rūpas.

### **Material Elements Born of Food (Ahāra Rūpa)**

The food - stuff having arrived at the stomach gets boiled up by gastric juice. While being boiling, the essence (Rasa) contained in food - stuff leaves and gets absorbed by different regions of the alimentary canal. The essence so absorbed is transported to specific sites of the body by the blood system and wherein the rupas in the essence by influencing rūpas already present at those sites produce additional types of rūpas. The

finest entity that comprise “Rasa” or essence is what is termed Āhāraja rūpa. The rūpas that are generated by this at the aforementioned specific sites are termed Ahāraja Rūpa.

The eighteen rūpas that are hitherto mentioned are four Mahabhūta rūpas, five prasāda rūpas, four gocara rūpas, two Bhāva rūpas, Haṛdayavastu rūpa, Jīvitāndriya rūpa and Ahāra rūpa. These are the main and fundamental.

The other more subsidiary <sup>13</sup> rūpas are Akāsa, Kāya Vijñapti, Vāg Vijñapti, Lahutā rūpa, Mudutā rūpas, Kamaññatā rūpa, Upachaya rūpa, Santati rūpa, Jaratā rūpa and Aniccata rūpa. This as stated earlier there are a total of twenty eight material elements or rūpas. All these are termed collectively as Rūpaśkandha.

### **Vedana skanda.**

Anything that can be seen by mind, can be known and grasped by mind is referred to as Aramunu or in plain English, “objects of mind.” Among Aramunu, there are objects that give pleasure to the mind such as masculine and feminine rupas, clothes, houses, chairs and beds, tables, utensils, voices and sounds, tasty foods and perfumes. These enrich the mind with pleasure. On the contrary, there are objects that cause displeasure to the mind in that the objects are such as faecal matter, Urine, blood, pus, spit, mucus..... etc. And still, there are some objects that, upon contact, engender a neutral feeling, the objects such as mountains, shrubs, trees are most likely to cause a neutral feeling. To the qualities inherent in mind - objects as

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13. These are not subsidiary indispensably but subsidiary in the sense that the eighteen above - stated rupas are more important.

pleasure-inducing and disgust<sup>14</sup>-inducing are designated, “Aramuna” When an object comes within the purview of mind, the qualities immanent in the so - called object by way of pleasure, displeasure and / or neutrality is also born with the aramuna. This is termed **Vedanā**. This is also included in one of the “cetasikhas,” mental formations. When such a formation enriches or fills the mind with pleasure, it is known as “sukha vedanā” where the term sukha means pleasure. Similarly, when the mind is filled with displeasure or revulsion it is known as “Dukkha vedanā” where the term “Dukkha” means suffering; and when unaccompanied by either sukkha vedana or Dukkha vedana it is appraised as “Upeksha vedanā” meaning neutrality or neutral effect. All these types of vedana or feeling in totality is given the epithet “**Vedanāskandha**,” the aggregate of feeling. Just as upon contact of the match stick with the match - box results in fire, the vedana arises conditioned upon the contact of objects in sense organs such as eye, ear....etc. Such as it is, the vedana are also classified based upon the sense through which the particular vedana comes into apprehension of the mind. **The Buddha on this point goes:- katamā ca bhikkhave vedanā? chaime bhikkhove vedanā kāyā, cakkhusampassajā vedanā. Sota sampassajā vedanā. Ghāna sampassajā vedanā. Jivha sampassajā vedanā. Kāya sampassajā vedanā. Mano sampassajā vedanā. Ayam vuccati bhikkhave vedanā.**

“Bhikkus! what are the feelings? feeling based on eye, ear, smell, taste, body and mind. Thus, there are six types of feelings.” These feelings are respectively in Pāli are; cakkhusampassaja vedanā, sōta sampassaja vedanā, gānasampassaja vedanā, jīvhā sampassajā vedana, kāyasampassaja vedanā, manosampassaja vedana. By

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14. Displeasure, revulsion as when one sees a decomposing dead body.

cakkhusampassaja vedanā what is meant is the feeling that is engendered as a result of the contact made by the eye with an object. Likewise it should be known with regard to sotāsampassaja vedanā.....etc. It <sup>15</sup> is vital to remember that vedanā arise in concomittance with the rest of the aggregates.

It is this very vedanā which is consided by the ordinary human being as being contituted of “sukha” (pleasure) or “Dukkha” (suffering). Among what they deem as sukha there's nothing that is so highly distinguished as “sukha vedana” (pleasurable feeling). Therefore they love “sukha vedanā” more than anything else. On account of “sukha vedanā” being non - spontaneous and for its aquisition certain other commodities being required such as food, money, houses - they secondarily love these objects. If “sukha vedanā” were to be spontaneous, people wouldn't love or try to acquire any of these things at all.

In the conflux of their life, people do everything that they are capable of in order to engender in their minds what is known as this “sukha vedanā.” On the other hand, it can be affirmed that, people do everything, inasmuch as they do every thing for sukha vedana, to avert, eliminate the opposite “Dukkha vedana” or if possible to eradicate it <sup>16</sup> (which is of course impossible). People fear enemies, diseases, cudgels, hell and prisons because of their desire to evade and escape suffering, i.e. “Dukkha Vedanā.” Although Vedana is something banal and commonplace, as it is grasped very seriously by ordinary laymen, Lord Buddha sequestered it specially from the cetasikas (mental formations) and included it in the discourse on the aggregates.

15. Added by the translator.

16. Added by the trauslator. Here a slight difference is meant in the words “eliminate” and “eradicate”. “Eliminate” is meant in a temporary sense of quenching Dukkha while “eradicate” is to completely evade suffering.

## Saññaskandha

<sup>17</sup>Of all the concepts herein laid down and admit of translation, this is the hardest. By the word “sañña” it is meant recognition, discrimination or knowing. Herein we come across a stumbling block. The word “Viññana” or consciousness also means knowing. One should therefore be careful not to muddle up these two words. <sup>18</sup>In this backdrop, what difference is there between the two words “sañña and” “viññana” one might question. This lies in the fact of “sañña” being non - sensuous or pure, being unaccompanied by any cetasikas or mental formations. The crux of the difference is contained in this very significant point. sannā is the differentiating factor that distinctly recognises soil - water - fire - wind - gold - silver - trees - creepers - roots - leaves - crusts - flowers - fruits - eatables - drinks - clothes - houses, voices and other sounds, men and animals, colours, smells, tastes and all things other than these that can be conceived through various qualities present in them. As things such as soil, water, fire and wind come under aforesaid “Gōcara rūpa,” sañña is classified in consonance with the six gocara rūpas of rūpa (form), shabda (sound), gandha (smell), rasa (taste), sparsha (tactile, contact) and dhamma (ideation based on memory and imagination). Buddha on this point said:

**“Katamā ca bhikkhave sannā chaime bhikkhave sannā kāyā. Rūpa-sanna sadda sannā, gandha sannā, rasa sannā,**

17. Added by the Translator. In this part of translation. Certain parts are omitted, for they don't make sense when translated into English.
18. Added by translator. Those who like more information on this point is advised to refer Buddhist logic by stcherbastky from this points up to the end of the paragraph.

**pottabbha sannā, dhamma sannā ayam vuccati bhikkhave! sanna”**

“Bhikkhus! what is sanña? Bhikkhus! Rūpa sanña, shabda sanña, gandha sanña, rasa sanña, sparsha sanña and dharma (dhamma) sanña. These six comprise the (mental) aggregate of sanña. Bhikkhus! know these to be sanña.”

Sanña is one of the dharmas, elements in the ultimate sense for it is a cetasika, a mental formation assisting in the recognition of the “object of consciousness.” Objects recognized by sanña are multifarious. As such, there are millions of types of sanña as mother (recognising) sanña, father (recognising) sanña....etc. Collectively all these varied sanñas are termed sanñaskandha, meaning group of sanñas, file of sanñas.

Among the things (mind - body aggregates) that ordinary person considers as an ego, I or personality, sanña is one of the most prominent. For which reason, in this world, uneducated, who has little of sanña, are sneered at while educated, who have a plenitude of sanña, are praised in the most eloquent terms. Lot undergo many an inconvenience on account of acquiring more and more sanña, which means to be educated and learned. Furthermore people waste lot of time and incur lot of expense for the purpose of elevating the faculty of sanña. The purport of education, in the proper sense, is to expand the horizons of sanña. If one exhausts oneself, suffers inconvenience, exerts tremendous effort for the sake of education, it is, in the actual sense, a <sup>19</sup> subconscious effort aimed at enlarging the boundaries of sanña. Some make themselves vain and give them airs as a result of the sanñaic knowledge they possess; “I know such and such languages,” “I am expert at so many sciences,” “I know these more than he,” “I can do better than anybody in this

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19. Added by the translator for enhancing the explanation in English.



field,” “I got through all these exams,” so many a man (or/and women) grasps onto *sañña* manifesting an egotistical hold on the *saññas*. Although *sañña*, like *vedanā*, is one of the *cetasikas*, Lord Buddha isolated it and provided it separately as the one of the mental composites forming the *nāma* aggregates for the reason that, as aforesaid, it is taken to be an ego - like force by samsaric beings. Thus is the *Sanñaskandha* as exposed in the profound teaching of the Buddha.

### **Sanskāraskandha** (**cetasikas or Mental Formations**)

<sup>20</sup> By *Sanskāra* it is the motive or intention with which an action is done that is understood. Herein, intention could be taken synonymously with “motive.” The Pali term for motive or intention is termed “*cetanā*.” Thus the *sanskaraskandha*, *ex vi termini* is that group of mental elements (*dharma*) which help generate and sustain the five aggregates, which based on *cetanā* aiding to perform such actions of humans like eating, drinking, bathing, sitting, walking and sleeping.

Actions, body, speech and mind are brought about by <sup>21</sup> *cetanā* (intention) with the support of the mind and other subsidiary *cetasikas* (mental formations or mental elements). Therefore, every human action has *cetanā* as its forerunner, as

20. Two sentences that were added by the translator for better clarification end.

21. Here one might question why *sanskaraskandha* is divided as *cetana* and subsidiary *caetasikas*. This is so, as would be explained later, because *cetana* is the centre around which all the rest of the *caetasikas* are organised, the fountain from which the little drops of other *caetasikas* splash and scatter around.

its chief. Cetanā alone, without the assistance of consciousness (or mind) and other subordinate cetasikas (mental formations), can perform no action. Therefore, the presence of other cetasikas are essential for the cetanā to be fructified in an action (kriya). Since these subordinate cetasikas act concurrently with cetanā, they too are sanskāras, forerunners of actions. However, as consciousness (citta), védana and sanña are taken to be three distinguished mental aggregates, they are not called sanskaras. Fifty cetasikas including cetanā are called sanskāra or “mental formations.”

Among the actions (deeds) effected by cetana based cetasikas, a part is done for “here” and a part for “hereafter.” Actions such as eating, drinking, staying, sitting, sleeping, going, dressing, supplying food and money are actuated towards the sustenance of the present - five - aggregates of this world. Among these actions, eating and maintenance of stance .....etc are performed for the rūpaskandha while consumption of tasty food, sporting, enjoying dances are for the vedanāskandha. Learning to read....etc are for sanñaskandha while actions discharged with a view to developing faith, wisdom and effort are for sankhara and viññana (consciousness, citta). At times eating, drinking and most of all other actions are executed for the (maintenance) of the five - aggregates. Deeds such as liberality, observance of sil (moral precepts) actuated with an eye to augmenting future status are for the five - aggregates to be gotten in the future (in a future life elsewhere) As, execution of each of the aforesaid actions is proceeded from cetanā, Lord Buddha, in places of sutras (discourses) where the five aggregates are explained in concise terms, has mentioned that the cetanā itself is sanskāriskandha. Cetanā, too, is sixfold just as much as vedanā and sanña are. Thus the Buddha has said.

**“Katame ca bhikkhave! samkhārā? chaime bhikkhave cetanākāyā. Rūpa samcetanā, sadda samcetanā, gandha samcetanā, rasa samcetanā, pottabbha samcetanā, dhamma samcetanā, ime vuccanti bhikkhave samkhara”**

“Bhikkhus! what are sanskāras? Bhikkhus! Rūpa cetanā, .....dhamma cetanā. Bhikkhus! These are termed sanskāras.”

Herein sanskāras are divided or categorised into six in accordance with the rūpas through which it manifests as it is, moreover, it is again categorised into three according to whether it (cetanā) is meritorious, demeritorious or neutral. “Kusala,” “Akusala” and “Avyacrutha” are the three Sinhalese terms respectively for the three divisions. When the cetanā is meritorious, such as when it is compassionate, sympathetic, faithful and <sup>22</sup> sagacious, it is given the epithet “kusala,” while it is demeritorious such as when it is fraught with lobha (greed), dosa (hatred) and moha (ignorance) it is called by the term “akusala.” When it is neither meritorious nor demeritorious, it is said to be neutral (Avyacrutha). Cetanā is supported and aided by forty nine subordinate cetasikas.

<sup>23</sup> It Should be known that there are ten cetasikas, amidst the forty nine, that are sometimes meritorious, again demeritorious and yet again neutral. Further more, there are fourteen cetasikas that are always demeritorious. So also there are twenty five cetasikas that are sometimes meritorious and at certain other times, depending on condition under which the mind arises, neutral. All these cetasikas together with cetanā form fifty cetasikas that comprise, in totality, the sanskāras.

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22. This word is meant as being adjectival to “Buddhist wisdom.”
23. In this connection it should be mentioned that in the Sinhala original the Ven. author gives the Pali names of all these cetasikas. For reasons of avoiding confounding the reader, I have decided to append Pali terms with respective English terms.

## Viññanaskandha

<sup>24</sup> You have come across the term Viññāna in the elaboration of previous concepts. Viññāna is an alternative name for mind or what in Pali is known as “citta.” **“Kathamāna bhikkhave! vinnana? chaime bhikkhave vinnanakayā, cakkhuvinnanam, sotavinnanam, ghanavinnanam, jivhavinnanam, kāyavinnanam, manovinnanam ayan vuccati bhikkhave vinnanam.”** Most often the term “consciousness” is used as the English equivalent of vinnana. By “Viññanaskandha” is understood the collective consciousnesses, infinite in number, that had ceased. Its meaning is a “group of consciousnesses or vinnanas.” Consciousnesses are generated at six doors of sense when an object manifests in their purview. Therefore, vinnanas are categorised in agreement with the sense door through which the object is arrested. Thus there are six Vinnanas as the Buddha has pointed out:

“Bhikkhus! what is Viññāna? Bhikkhus!  
 the eye - consciousness (chucshur Viññāna),  
 ear - consciousness (shrota - Viññāna.....  
 .....mind - consciousness (Mano - Viññāna).  
 Bhikkhus! These are called Viññāna.”

When an object presents itself before the eye, a consciousness arises that recognises or rather cognises the object. This consciousness or Viññāna is termed “eye - consciousness.” The ordinary - lay people call this vision in spite of the fact that it is the mind or consciousness that is actually there and should be *de facto* referred to.

Terms at the end of this text.

24. Added by the translator.

When a sound comes into collision with the ear, a consciousness arises, ear - consciousness, to which ordinary - lay people refer to as “hearing.”

Similarly when a smell comes into contact with the nose, a consciousness arises that is labelled smell - consciousness. When a taste crouches on the surface of the tongue, it gives rise to a consciousness, to wit, taste - consciousness (Jivhā Viññana) Ordinary - lay people call these, respectively, smelling and tasting.

When something touches the body, it arouses Kāya Viññana, which, according to the terminology of the ordinary - lay people manifests as pain, burning, titilating, scratching and soothing. All but the forms of the aforementioned consciousnesses, are called Manō - Viññana. What ordinary - lay people call “mind” is this very “Manō - Viññana.”

Thus, what to the world is known as vision, hearing, pain, soothing, pleasure are, in the ultimate sense, is Viññanaskandha. Vinnana, like sañña, is also divided into meritorious (kusala), demeritorious (akusala) and neutral (Avyacrutha). <sup>25</sup>These should be understood exactly in the manner as they were considered under sanskaraskandha.

So, the end of the exposition of panchas-kandha has been reached. Lord Buddha has compared rūpaskandha to a bunch of spume, Vedanaskandha to a bubble of water, sanñaskandha to a mirage, sanskārankandha to a plantain trunk, and Viññanaskandha to an act of magic or an illusion.

**“Phenapindūpamam rupam vēdanā, bubbuloopamā,  
mareecikūpamā sañña saṅkhārā kadaloopamā,  
māūpamañca Viññanam deepitha dīccabandhunā.”**

## 26 Suffering Experienced By the Five Aggregates.

Beings, pervading infinite space, in billions upon billions of gallactic systems and milky ways that range the Universe, whosoever they may be, of whatever nature they are, whether they be human, deva, naga or titan, are made of the skandhas. This means to say that they are nama - rupa, mental and corporeal aggregates. But for skandhas, there is nothing specially in the ultimate sense, as animal, person, god or man. Just as except for cement, wood, bricks and plastic there is nothing called the house, there is no being except for the skandhas. Every being has, as aforesaid, the five skandhas. Among the Buddhist genera of beings, those who inhabit the rupaloka possess only the bodily form. In contrast arūpaloka whose *beings comprise only the four mental aggregates of vedana, sanña, sanskāra and Vinñāna*. Corporeal or form aggregate is in them, absent. Except these two realms, the life in every other realm of beings is but the five aggregates in fluctuation. If there's anything in the world to be called suffering, it is these very five aggregates. Excluding the five fold aggregates, there is nothing that we can rightly or justly call suffering. Therefore, Buddha, in sermons elaborating on the fact of suffering, stigmatised the five - aggregates as suffering itself since, suffering is nothing but the five aggregates, the genesis of a being is the genesis of the five suffering - fraught <sup>27</sup>“mountains” and living or continuing to live by a being was the continued

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26. Although the title is thus translated conventionally, it should be emphasised that apart from aggregates there is no sufferer, the aggregates, mental - corporeal, and themselves the suferer.

27. By “mountain” is meant something immense or vast. It is a peculiar idiomatic mage of pali and sinhala.

existence of the five suffering fraught “mountains” thus should it be known by the discerning one.

### **The four Natural Qualities of suffering.**

There are four natural qualities of suffering or Dukkha sobhāwa as expatiated in the Patisambhida Magga palī.

- 1) **Peedana** <sup>28</sup> swabhava
- 2) **Sankhata** swabhava
- 3) **Santāpa** swabhava
- 4) **Viparināma** swabhava

By peedana swabhavaya, what is meant is that “quality” of suffering which brings repeated mental or physical (or both) agony. “Sankhata swabhava” refers to the quality of suffering that entails anything to be conditionally brought forth to existence by re-enacting the same procedure or train that bringeth suffering. Santapa swabhava is quality ...that, like fire, continually “burns” the mind. While viparināma swabhava points to the impermanent, rebecoming, continuous deteriorating of a thing considered.

If anything is ingrained with these four “qualities,” that is nothing but suffering. Those who are unskilful in the cognition of the FNTs suppose birth as a human, god or brahama god as splendid, but these bodies (mental and material aggregate) are too affected with the four qualities herein mentioned. Therefore these bodies also are based upon the edifice of suffering. How gravely the skandhas of hellish beings are impregnated with suffering, one need not speculate. The fact of suffering can be digested by assimilating the qualities, peedana swabhāva ....etc of the supposedly exalted skandhas of brahma

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28. This is the sinhala equivalent of Sanskrit “sobhāwa.”

gods down to those of devas and humans. Once the four qualities are clearly seen, the suffering based nature of the object concerned can be arrived at. Thus from superior skandhas of brahma gods down to those of <sup>29</sup> devas and humans, their suffering - fraught nature is explained through qualities of peedana .....etc.

Alternatively it should be seen that peedana swabhāva is the main root quality of Dukkha. The other three swabhavas such as sankhata..... etc could be taken as subordinate forms of peedana swabhāva or peedana swabhāva is always present as agglomerated with the other three qualities. Peedana swabhāva is *piece de resistance* of the process of suffering. <sup>30</sup> It is also characterised by tension and fear.

Peedana <sup>31</sup> svabhāva arises along with sankhata, santāpa and Viparinama svabhāvayas natures or qualities. For those who take the five aggregates as “I” or “mine” will have to face mental and / or physical agony by way of sankhata svabhāva, then, later, the same agony by way of santāpa svabhāva and even later agony of deterioration by way of Viparinama Svabhāva. Since peedana svabhāvaya is the root factor in the determination of suffering and manifests in no small amount in the other three factors, it is thus expanded by means of sankhata svabhāva ....etc.

## Suffering Entailed by gods in Brahma Reaml.

A being cannot easily be reborn a brahma god. To be reborn in a brahma realm, to beget the brahma skandhas one

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29. devas is synonymous with gods, demi - gods and deities.

30. Added by the translator.

31. Sobhāwa = Svabhava. svabhāwa is the sinhala equivalent of the sanskrit word.



must perform the appropriate merits conducive to birth in a brahma realm. Inability to beget easily but by strenuous meritorious action is the sankata Svabhāwa of the brahma skandhas. To perform<sup>32</sup> ordinary acts of liberality and to observe sil (disciplinary rules) wouldn't carry one to a brahma realm. One can reborn in a brahma realm only by the merit of developing Jhānas (trances). Development of Jhānas belongs to the sphere of supramundane merits while liberality and observance of sil belong to the mundane sphere of meritorious actions. It is no easy task to achieve jhānas. Jhāna can only be attained to only after having forsaken one's family, property, friends, having come to a quiet forest - resort, having subdued sloth and torpor, having curtailed the duration of sleep, having borne the trouble inflicted by changes in temperature, mosquitoes and fleas, hunger and thirst, having considered meditation one's chief duty and continuing to meditate for fairly a long period of time by exerting oneself to the fullest. Among the ones that put continuous effort in attaining to Jhānas only one out of a thousand succeeds while nine -- hundred and ninety nine's effort falls useless on the ground.

For one who is desirous of attaining to Jhānas, having to leave behind property and wealth is some sort of a suffering. The same can be said of having to forsake one's family, friends and relatives, having to lead a lonely existence, having to subsist on scant food, having to break rest and having to be deprived of dozen other necessities which one might have enjoyed while a lay - person. If brahma skandhas were something that could be garnered naturally, one would be spared of all the suffering that one might have to undergo by way of attaining Jhānas.

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32. Acts that are usually performed by ordinary, common folk.

As brahma skandhas has to be generated by Jhānas that are of sankata svabhāwa, one who intends becoming a brahama god has to yield to the sufferings aforementioned since these sufferings on-rush the brahma skandhās, this is a case of suffering, oppression, by the brahma skandhās on the person who desireth of begetting such a group of brahma skandhas. If a certain dharma oppresses a being, that which so oppresses the being is not something wholesome but unwholesome tainted by the sway of suffering. Therefore the brahma skandhas that urges the one who wants to attain to its level through the practice of Jhānas is oppressive and fraught with suffering. This is how sankata svabhāwa shows itself in skandhas of brahma gods.

A person, either trying to get or have already gotten a <sup>33</sup>name - form of a brahma, would be pelted with four types of fires. When one has acquired the skandhas by undergoing an innumerable quantity of suffering and even sorrow, it still is permeated by the fire of sakkāya ditthi the “I” or an immortal personality. The fire of craving too emerge as when considering things as mine. So also is, “Mada ginna,” medium or moderate fire in the form of pride in having achieved brahmahood. And yet again there is “pramāda ginna” or fire of procrastination that ill - affords the person, who have reached brahmahood, to perform acts of merit. Brahma gods are merely enjoying a passive form of existence. Such is the way the four fires keep on raging. Such fires of defilements, once having lit in the mind - current of being, keep on pounding for many lives ahead. The fires aroused by such defilements are like poison of a rat that slowly, meekly, subverts the host eluding detection until after a long time. So, the burning effects of defilements,

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33. Five or four skandhas of a brahma.

in the beginning, do not make themselves known and in fact impersonate as wholesome and happiness - inducing but, later, unexpectedly reveal their, actual seam - side as when they make the being suffer in hells and other lower worlds. Defilements that manifest themselves in brahma skandha are so portent that they are able to consign the being right down to the hellish existence. The presence of defilements are collectively the santapa svabhava of the brahma skandhas. Thus is how the ordinarily exalted brahma skandhas is pervaded with suffering.

However exalted the brahmahood may be, however great the brahma gods, though the brahma skandhas are born by the merit of the<sup>34</sup> rūpāvacara ecstasy (Jhāna), yet they are also in a state of flux, in a state of rebecoming, of instantaneous birth and death, i.e. in a state of impermanence. This is the Viparināma svabhava of brahma skandhās. Because of viparinama, brahmas will have to fall down, perchance, into the kāmā loka (human and heavenly realms). Perhaps, once in the kāmā loka, they might still fall down in as far down as the<sup>35</sup> Avīchi hell. They may also subsequently be born as a peta, an unhappy ghost or an earth-bound deity. Or, furthermore, they still have the tendency to be born as dogs, cats, crows, fleas, mosquitoes and bugs..... etc. <sup>36</sup> Sometimes, a brahma god can fall from his exalted status straight down into a hellish existence. Disallowing a brahma to maintain his *status quo* and putting him down to a lower level of existence are brought forth by the Viparināma svabhava of the brahma aggregates. When such a portent evil as Viparināma is intermixed and thrives in the brahma skandhas how else but with suffering should we view the skandhas of

34. One of the hire trances that leads one to a brahma realm wherein only form prevails and nama are absent.

35. A hellish realm full of destructive and raging fire.

36. The whole sentences added by the translator

brahmas? Thus is the Dukkha experienced by brahma skandhas by way of Viparināma svabhāwa. Now one can but clearly see that brahma skandhas are wedded with all the qualities, to wit peedana, sankhata, santāpa and Viparināma and that the brahma skandhas are encompassed by the “fact of suffering.”

### **Suffering In the Heavenly Realms.**

Except by performing meritorious actions, to be born in heaven is impossible. The fact of birth in a heavenly realm by acquiring prolific merit is the sankata svabhāva of the heavenly <sup>37</sup>aggregates, owing to this sankata svabhāva of the heavenly aggregates, one desirous of being born in heaven has to give in charity his hard - earned wealth and strive strenuously to observe the religious etiquette (sīla). So also he/she has to respect the elders, to construct wells, ponds, roads and pagodas. Since the result is going to be scant if the meritorious action is small, because of the fear engendered by this, one has to expend lot of money and render massive acts of charity. Some times while so doing, one has to live a life of poverty. However much one may indulge in charitable actions, if by chance sins were also committed, the road to the heavenly realm would be barred and overshadowed by the road to hell, one has to constantly guard his thoughts, words and actions.

It is a nuisance to discharge acts of merit. It is oppressive and gravely fraught with suffering. To guard the mind, words and actions is cumbersome. For one who desists from unwholesome actions has to distance himself from what others do for fun. Such a one is also cumbered from eating and drinking in the way he or she is prone to do. Again, the one is unable to supply himself with the commodities the one aspires to. His religious

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37. Panchaskandha of a god, a heavenly being.

or ascetic policy prevents the one from safeguarding his or her wealth. Never can the one foster his family properly, furthermore the one is not in a position to follow a prescribed medication. Since the one can't behave as he or she wishes, the whole world for him or her is a prison. These are some of the ways in which suffering confronts the one desirous of begetting heavenly aggregates. Heavenly aggregates oppresses the person who likes it and therefore heaven too is certainly sorrow fraught.

Once having born in heaven, by dint of hard earned merit, lust, anger and delusion impinge the <sup>38</sup> deva mind through the six doors of sense distempering it with a burning - like sensation. After the deva mind having being polluted by the above dust of defilements, it also causes itself to fall into the dark dungeons of the hell. A deva also continues to be affected with birth, oldage, anguish, sorrow, death, despair, distress and lamentation. Thus, the deva being afflicted by eleven coarse defilements is the *santāpa svabhāwa* of the heavenly aggregates. Therefore it is a heap of suffering.

Since heavenly aggregates have been engendered by meritorious actions less potent than those of brahma skandhas, their duration is enormously less than that of the brahma skandhas; once the potency of the meritorious actions exhausts, then the heavenly aggregates would disintegrate and be carried off. This is the *viparināma svabhāwa* of the heavenly aggregates. When even in today's world it is not tolerated a loss of a thing that costs one or two rupees<sup>39</sup> (a negligible amount) how can anyone look with indifference the dissociation of his or her heavenly existence? This dissociation of heavenly aggregates

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38. One who inhabits a heavenly sphere.

39. Designation of Sri Lankan currency

is intolerable to the god who holds fast to his existence. When the death approaches a heavenly being, it is foretold by certain signs that appear. Gods come to know their impending death by these portents that death has approached. Having known of their imminent death, they grieve over it. Because of this grief or *santāpa* and *viparināma* they are mostly headed towards to rebirth in lower worlds.

Sometimes while they (the gods) are enjoying heavenly pleasures, they suddenly disappear from the heavenly realm and are reborn, in the lowest purgatories, realm of unhappy ghosts (*pretas*), and as dogs, wolves, boars, crows and iguanas. So also they are reborn as worms and bugs. If the heavenly *skandhas* were stable and permanent, they would not suffer such degradation. It happens owing to the *viparināma svabhāwa* of the heavenly *skandhas*. It is a case of oppression of *viparināma svabhāwa* as all heavenly *skandhas* are pelted and palled by *peedana*, *sankhata*, *santāpa* and *viparināma*, the Buddha, knower of the three worlds, affirmed that they are based on suffering. So, are the suffering experienced in heavenly worlds.

### **Suffering In the Human world.**

The five human aggregates too have to be obtained through *Dāna* and *sīla* (liberality and discipline). It cannot be yielded for nothing. It is the *sankata svabhāva* of the five human aggregates that they should be obtained by meritorious actions. The amount of suffering that has to be undergone by way of doing wholesome actions is quite less in the case of human aggregates than in *brahma* or heavenly aggregates. In *brahma* and *deva skandhas* dejection or despondency is pretty less or little. Since human aggregates must be so often renewed, dejection and despondency prevail until death of the human

being. And, this is a serious form of suffering.

Human body alias rūpaskandha wastes itself away incessantly. It has quite often to be rejuvenated with food. Having once revitalised with food, the revitalisation does not last even a day. Therefore in order to sustain it, one has to eat several times a day. Unless the frequent utilization of food, the human skandhas disintegrate. With regard to finding any food, if suffering befalls any human, it is because of the sankhata svabhāwa of constant, periodic rejuvenation of the human body. To have a mere snippet of food, a man has to dissipate his energy a thousand times.

To be plentiful of rice in the next year, man has to gird his loins from this year and really apply himself. For the farmer, in order to assure his share of rice for the coming year, has to keep a good store of paddy seeds this year. Once the seed planting time approaches he has to have his field ready by ploughing, fertilizing the soil ....etc. Thereafter he has to sow the seeds. He has to nurture and protect the seedlings. When the paddy is ripe he has to cut, thresh, clean and store them safely in barns. Then, again he has to undergo a lot of strain step by step till the rice is made consumable.<sup>40</sup> So, for each and everyone of these tasks, he has to expend lot of energy and time a thousand or more times.

Having brought the paddy seed, after so much pain and torment, to the level of the palatable rice, the farmer cannot still stay relaxed. For he needs curries to eat with rice. This exacts more effort and industry from the one bent on consuming rice. Those who are not farmers have to earn lot of money to supply themselves with the food of their choice.

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40. Here I have by-passed a step of the process.

Nor is food the only thing needed to sustain the body. Man needs clothes as well as houses to live in. So also, he needs the accoutrement for the houses. To have all these, man has to put no small amount of effort to earn <sup>41</sup> money. All these daunting tasks man has to undergo springs from the sankhata Svabhāva of the five aggregates.

Unlike in heavenly and brahma realms, the santāpa Dukkha is more acute in the human realm. The five aggregates, from their very inception to the end, is afflicted with multifarious sufferings. In the very inception of skandhas, to live in the uncomfortable, incommodious mother's womb in itself is great suffering to endure. To be, later, ejected out is even a worse form of suffering. After emanation into world, to stay a long period of time as a handicapped is another form of suffering. However, gingerly by one may protect his body, still he would be overwhelmed with diseases of all sorts. This is also very grave suffering. However much we clean the human body, it still becomes, again and again, fulsome, this is also, so to speak, nothing but suffering. Human body also get tormented by coldness and heat, this too is indubitably suffering. Furthermore, it is tremendous suffering to be bitten by bugs, flies, mosquitoes, various types of ants and snakes. Neither is it any less suffering to have ones money and wealth defalcated by thieves and enemies. Nor is this all. To be humiliated, to be beaten, to fight with enemies, to come under the thumb of enemies and those whom one dislikes are also what? But suffering.

Suffering undergone with regard to fostering one's family is enormous. And it is more or less similar in the cases of

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41. Added by the translator.



looking into activities of one's friends and relations, in caring for one's village, country and nationality. It is yet another store of suffering in discharging duties demanded by one's job. The human being is sometimes compelled to fight and make war with the one's creeds, governments, communities adversaries on battle arena whereto bombs, missiles, rockets and mortars may fall and scatter one into pieces sundry. And if in the event of enemy factions progressing with destructive rage and fury, burning down houses and massacring one's colleagues, the one has to retreat helter skelter leaving behind one's wealth and property to the furious antagonists. <sup>42</sup>What ye say of this? Isn't this dukkha?

In such a retreat as aforesaid, one may have to stay without a house, sleep without a mattress or a pillow, and to live without food. This is unbearable. Perchance one has to stay in the enemy jail and would be tortured and die in the process. This too is unbearable. One's family members, relations might be taken into prison and treated harshly; this is unbearable to patiently look on. To become a debtor and to confront the creditor is also suffering. It is also within the purview of suffering to forsake the house together with the family and wander like vagabonds on the streets on account of being unable to pay the debts.

Nay are all this. To be caught in towering fires is suffering. Also, to be caught in great floods that submerge is also but suffering. To eat insufficiently during a famine is suffering. Turbulence of mind in anticipation of trouble is suffering. The inability to get what one wants is suffering. Having to do certain misdeeds to meet one's needs is suffering. The fires of lust and greed that arise from objects

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42. Added by the translator for the sake of more emphasis.

perceived through the doors of sense is suffering. To be separated from those one like is suffering. The five aggregates are constantly been plagued by these sufferings and still more other sufferings not mentioned here. This is the santapa svabhawa of the five aggregates.

Relative to the aggregates of the brahmas and devas viparināma affects fast on the human aggregates. The (human) <sup>43</sup> aggregates are very weak. The type of foes that “douse the glim” are abundantly contained in the human body. Those are also plentiful in our surroundings. The distempering of gas inside the body can bring about imminent destruction of life. So also, is the case similar with bile, phlegm, worms, the quality of hardness (pruthivi.) Watery element (āpo), fire-element (théjo) and windy element (vāyo). Food, *piece de resistance* of the body's sustenance, can sometimes also be a factor in crushing the human life. These, such as bile, phlegm etc etc. are foes established within the human fortification alias body.

Adversaries of man, both within and outside himself, are legion. And the adversaries can be animate as well as inanimate. Water in the form of floods, infernos, wind in the form of cyclones and tornadoes, stones and pointed edges are some of the inanimate objects. And the means by which they act as antagonists of the man. At certain times, house, which is considered a great refuge by man, turns a destructive agent of man. Are there some animals on land and in water as crocodile, sharks, snake, lion, leopard, elephant and bear, they all are man's enemies. Moreover, there are invisible enemies as devils, demons and earth bound spirits. Man himself is an arch foe of man. For a single human being except a small group of

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43. When aggregates are mentioned without reference to any class of beings, it is to be taken as human aggregates.

human beings, the rest are mostly antagonists. That they don't perpetrate any misdeed not because they are friendly but because they are not in a proper position to launch an act of coarseness. Even those who are within the scope of friends and relations occasionally do turn to be enemies. Therefore, in the world, incidences galore in which children kill their parents and vice versa, brothers and sisters killing each other, wives killing husbands and vice versa ....etc, etc.

Life of a man, brimming with foes, both from within and outside, is like a drop of water hanging from the end of a grass blade. A moment, minute or hour within which it can't be destroyed, no one can chart. Man dies, before it emerges from the mother's womb, while emerging from the womb, in a few months, during childhood and so also during adolescence. No period of time can be found wherein man can stay with solace that nothing bad is going to happen. And all this is grave suffering.

Man has in his lot to bear the sorrow when his family members and whom he likes are bereaved. There is massive mental turbulence in suspecting that there is some reason that there's going to be death for his near and dear ones. The fear and apprehension incurred when thinking that there's going to be certain detriment to one's life is enormous and that is nothing but *Dukkha*. It is mind boggling and heart burning to come to know that there is certain detriment to one's life. <sup>44</sup> There happens to be defecation and urination in those instances. The painful feeling that is engendered in those instances is (extremely suffering - fraught) excruciating.

Because of the aforementioned incessant transformations, *viparināma*, man, peradventure, is deemed to be born a

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44. Added by the translator.

bug, worm, pig or a dog. By being born a cow, a horse or an elephant, one may have to do drudgery under a human master. It is also possible for a one to be born as an unholy ghost (preta) which has no house to stay in, no clothes to wear, no food to quench its hunger, no water to allay its thirst, to eat phlegm and mucous, to eat faecal matter and to feed on discarded rice and other stuff to be found on heaps of waste. For one who has treaded on comfortable chairs and sofas would perhaps have to be born in hells such as “Sanjīwa” wherein the one would have to be blubbering in the midst of raucous, raging fires. Sometimes all the five skandhas are simultaneously affected by the floods of Viparināma. Otherwise it is only a part of the Skandhas that is affected. By thus, a part of the skndhas being soiled by viparinama, a person who previously had eye sight may get blind, a person who previously could hear may become deaf. A person who was not dumb may become dumb. A person who was not lame may become lame. A person who had a straight spine may become one with a bent spine. Those who were endowed with nose, ears, teeth, hair, fingers and hands would, in the time to come, become deprived of these. Those who are beautiful become deformed and ugly in direct proportion to time. Wise turn stupid. Sound mentalities turn comatose. Disciplined become indisciplined. Grateful change into ungrateful or robbers or adulterers So also some may be transformed into liars, drunkards, slanderers, abusers. Friends may become enemies. The pious may become infidels.

This Viparināma svabhāwa is not only attributed to human aggregates but to which he owes in the name of property and wealth as well. The transformation of the five aggregates is conditioned, to a certain extent, by the changes that affect what he owes. Those who made themselves known for the sheer squander of their wealth might have to beg later. This is

just to mention a tiny drop of what confronts the the five aggregates in the form of Viparinama dukka. As this aggregates are repeatedly tormented by sankhata, santāpa and viparinama svbhāwas, Lord Buddha, the omniscient one, affirmed that the five aggregated are dukkha, and it is the “fact of suffering,” the first of four noble truths.

## **Suffering In The Hells.**

<sup>45</sup>Purgatory (Narakaya), bestial world, the world of prettas or unholy ghosts and the world of the titans are the worlds of suffering. All agree to its immensity of suffering. Therefore, herein only a succinct explanation would be made thereof. Skandhas of the beings of hell are brought forth by unwholesome actions. The mind of the laymen are easily involved in sinful activity. Thus, for the laymen, sin is a delicious thing. Relative to the sankhata svabhāva of brahmas, god and humans, the hellish beings could be thought as having less of it. Although sankhata svabhāwa is a little less, they can said to have a great deal of santāpa svabhāwa.

### **The Bestial World.**

Amongst the four types of hells, the bestial world is very visible before our own eyes. Although in it the suffering is less than the other three types of hells, when compared to the human world, its suffering is very extensive. All the animals or beasts comprising the bestial world don't have the requisite knowledge to supply themselves with food that they need. If they

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45. I have merely used this term as a English equivalent of the term “Narakaya” and as a synonym of “hell” Here one should not be concerned with the subtleties and nuances of the term as may be revealed by the Christian use of the term.

don't get food naturally, they have to suffer hunger and thirst. Perhaps they have to die by hunger and thirst. The world has abundant creatures that die of hunger and thirst. Most beasts for want of knowledge to prepare shelter for themselves run amok being scorched by heat and drenched by rain. They too have lot of enemies or antagonists. As they don't have either the strength or a protector, helper to ward off sudden death, they are invariably pelted with the fear of unexpected death and therefore have to go in hiding. In case of a sickness or a begotten wound they don't have the know - how for recuperation. When they are weighed down by diseases or wounds, nobody have they as relatives and friends to serve them but enough are there to eat their flesh, to eject off the eyes and to suck blood. When mosquitoes and flies suck blood, when crows beak the flesh, and wolves and dogs tore flesh in shreds, lot of beasts die on their own faeces. However much they hide or run, most beasts are unable to circumvent their more powerful counterparts. When, once a meek animal is caught by a more powerful beast, the meek one is gormandized alive without heed to the freakish cry it makes. Sometimes the meek animal is trampled while being eaten. Humans also kill and eat lot of bestial animals. When the mother beast is watching, its little ones are snatched and killed, then eaten. Animals such as cows are burnt on red - heated iron bars. Some animals for the entirety of their lives are being caged and tied merely for the enjoyment of men and women. Animals such as cows are tied till the end of their life and beaten and hit with sticks cum cudgel to force them to <sup>46</sup> work for their human masters. After having continuously made them work, finally some kill them and eat their flesh as well.

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46. In countries of the South East Asia cows are used not only for milk and meat but for driving cart, and carriages (transportation) as well. In this process, cows are beaten severely.

These are a few examples pertaining to the santapa dukkha of the beasts. Since bestial animals are devoid of the capability of differentiating between good (actions) and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, whatever they do could be categorised as sins with the result that they are bent on being born in a still darker world than the world they are already in. Therefore, not only living but also dying is as much a suffering for the beast. Birth, living and dying are exceedingly unwholesome and immanently suffering for bestial animals. Thus skandhas of an animal are but suffering.

### **The world of Unholy Ghosts or pretas.**

Pretas are a class of beings whose suffering enormously exceeds that of beasts. They are spontaneously generated. Origination, which is like a flash of lightening appearing in the sky, like an image appearing in a mirror, without the union of parents, appearing with completely developed organs by the power of karma is known as spontaneous generation. Generally, those born of parents beget bodies that resemble either or partly both of the parents.

Spontaneous generation occurs by the force of Karma. As such, spontaneously generated prētas have bodies, depending on their demeritorious actions, of multifarious shapes and sizes. As a class of beings, they cannot be exemplified in this manner. Their nature can be fathomed, their diverse sizes and shapes, from canonical texts as “Prētavattu Prakaraṇa.” To familiarise yourself with the multiplicity of prētās, descriptions be seen by only those who have developed extra - sensory type of perception particularly, clairvoyance. In the “Lakkhana Samyuktha,” twenty one diversifications of prētās are mentioned, that had come within the celestial view (clairvoyance)

of the great arhat Ven. Lakkhana. (1) One of them was devoid of flesh and blood and was just a skeleton. It was walking on air with a fearful cry of submission pursued by crows (belonging to prētas) hawks and eagles that pierce it through the skeleton with their beaks. (2) There was another preta, whose body was like unto a piece of flesh, who was chased by crows, poked into flesh and eaten. (3) Another preta was seen similar to this. (4) A preta with its body sans skin was also seen. (5) A preta with wool all over body, the wool likened unto “swords that cut through” its body. (6) A préta with a wool covering, likened unto weapons, cutting into its body. (7) Yet another préta with wool, likened unto arrows, that stabbed into its body. (8) Still, again, another preta which had wool, likened unto needles, that sprang into air and back on to the preta with pointed ends. Those needles piercing his head entered the body and off they went through the mouth. Again coming through the mouth, go off through its chest. Still, needles coming through the chest, go off through the stomach. Having again entered through the stomach, they leave through the thighs. Again coming through the thighs pierce out of the feet. Still again the needles stab-into through the feet and the top of the head and go out jabbing through the soles. The preta subjected to all these suffers dreadful pain. (9) Another préta has been seen with a scrotum as large as a huge pitcher. While the préta walked, it kept the scrotum on its shoulders and sat on it when it wanted to sit. (10) A préta was seen embedded its head down in a sewerage. (11) A préta drenched in a sewerage eating feecal matter with both its hands was also seen. (12) A préta, skinless, was seen, being eaten by hawks and crows. (13) A préta being consumed by hawks and crows being also foul - smelling and deformed, was seen. (14) A préta crying amidst burning coal..... (15) A préta harassed (gouged) by hawks and eagles, having no head, mouth



and eyes on the chest.... (16) A luminous burning bhikshu (monk) prēta in yellow robes..... (17) A similar female priest with yellow robes..... (18) A similar <sup>47</sup> silmāta prēta..... (19) A prēta of a novice monk..... (20) A prēta of a novice female monk (priestess)....., These all what had been seen by the great arhat Ven. Lakkhana. Besides these, there are so many pretas with a variety of body shapes, karmas and bodies. Not being supplied with food, nor clothes, nor houses to live, being burnt by fire, being trapped in the whole life time within sewerages, being cut and chopped by weapons, and being eaten by brutes (animals) are some of the Santāpa dukkhas met in the sphere of pretas. As they are inflicted with the aforementioned types of suffering, prēta skandhas are indubitably, so to speak, suffering and unsatisfactory.

### **The world of Titans.**

Titans are of Various categories. Those of whom are classified under “hell”, are a group of beings resembling prētas. Their bodies are about 12 miles in length. They have a mouth about as tiny as the eye of a needle. The mouth is positioned at the top of the head. Since the mouth is so small, they have no opportunity whatsoever for quenching their hunger and thirst. Being destitute of nourishment, their bodies are skeleton - like without any appreciable amount of blood and flesh. Their eyes are like those of shrimps, jutting forward. Being extremely weak and lacking in strength, they are unable, even to get - up. They are termed or given the epithet “Kālakanjhika prētas.” The grave suffering they go through from birth to death, within expanses of thousands of years, would not be there if not for

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47. Sil Mata is a term that is used for a lay women undertaken to practise higher disciplinary codes.

their skandhas. As long as they possess their “titan pancaskandha,” they have no way of escape or release from gruesome suffering. Therefore, it should be very clear that the “titan pancaskandha” is but suffering.

## **Purgatory.**

Out of the suffering - laden realms, the most macabre is the purgatory. There are a multiplicity of purgatories. Each purgatory has its own forms of instilling abominable suffering upon those who have erred. Being burnt by fire, being fixed on to lances on the larva like heated floor, the body hatcheted to shreds and pieces, the body being put asunder by double edged saws, being made to drink hot molten copper and swallow hot, molten balls of larva, being grinded by rolling, huge mountain like rocks, body being bruised by smoke entering the sense - doors, being prodded and eaten by hawks with metal-like beaks, being clubbed by the guardians of hell, agents of<sup>49</sup> Yama, like cows, being tied on to carts and made to haul them with gigantic weights and bulks, being made to run about, till the body cut and hacked, in fields of knife - like grass blades and sword - like leaves. Once the body is cut and chopped and become like unto a piece of blood - diffused flesh, it being thrown into rivers of saltish water, being hauled into sewerages wherein are worms that eat through skin, flesh and synovial joints - are only an inconspicuous speck of suffering as it exists in some of the purgatories.

All in all, the suffering in the pusgatory can never be brought within a boundary or limit by stipulations as for hundred years or a thousand years. Once Buddha remarked

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49. A god who is known preside over some purgatories.

that parables galore to elicit the overwhelming of bitter suffering in the purgatory. Thereat, one Bhikku stood up and requested the Buddha to bring out a parable to illustrate the acrimonius suffering met by those in the purgatories. The Buddha replied, "Bhikkhus!, the soldiers catch a thief and bring him before the king and solicit the king to duly punish him. The king orders to take him away and in the morning to stab with a lance hundred times. The soldiers carry out the order of the king as it was. Thereafter, the king in the mid - day inquires from the soldiers as to the condition of the thief and the soldiers inform him that the thief is still alive. Then the king once again orders to administer another hundred lance - stabs to the thief, which the soldiers accomplish at mid - day. In the evening too the king inquires the same and come to know that the thief is still alive. Yet again the king orders to deliver another hundred lance - stabs to the thief. What O! Bhikkhus! do you think, would not the thief become doomed and agrieved after three hundred lance - stabs?" Thereupon the Bhikkhus utter that from a one single lance - stab he would come to grief and excruciating pain, nay to say anything of three - hundred lance stabs. Whereupon , the Buddha took a pebble into his hand and asked, Bhikkhus! what is larger?, is this pebble on my hand or the Himalaya mountain? Bhikkhus replied, Lord!, the blessed one! the pebble on your hand is not thousandth nor a ten - thousandth nor yet a one - hundred thousandth part of the Himalaya mountain. Nay, indeed the pebble should be something at all to be compared with the Himalaya mountain. Thereto, the Buddha rejoined, Bhikkhus! even so sorrow and suffering of the thief stricken three - hundred lance stabs is not a thousandth nor a ten - thousandth nor yet a one - hundred - thousandth part of suffering inflicted in the purgatories. Nay indeed should it be

compared with the suffering in purgatory. So said the exalted one.

The cataclismic agony and lamentation suffered by the inmates of the purgatory would not have come about if not for the existence of the purgatorial pancaskandha. So long as the skandhas exist, so long would the suffering last. Consequently, purgatorial suffering is an act of oppression by the pancaskandha. Thus, purgatorial skandhas are but suffering.

The skandhas of all the realms encompassing the highest brahma worlds to the degrading, severest of suffering - fraught Avechi purgatory, including all beings of varying sizes and shapes are by their very nature oppressive (peedana), conditioned (sankhāta), despairing (santāpa) and distortive and changing (viparināma). As all the skandhas of all the manifold beings are battered by these four lamentable characteristics, they certainly are suffering. The person who sees this realises, what is most difficult to realise, the first noble truth of the fact of suffering, dukkha.

## **The Twelve Modes of suffering.**

Given below is the twelve modes or ways of suffering manifest that as mentioned in "Vibhaṅga Prakaraṇa" of the Abhidhamma piṭaka. (1) Jāti (birth), (2) Jarā (ageing, senescence), (3) Marana (death), (4) shōka (sorrow), (5) Paridēva (lamentation), (6) <sup>50</sup> dukkha (pain), (7) Dōmanassa (grief), (8) Ūpayāsa (despair), (9) Apriya Saṃprayōga (association with disliked, unbeloved), (10) Priya Viprayōga (Separation from the loved, likes), (11) Not to get what

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50. dukka here is not the suffering mentioned before but a special form of suffering translated as "pain."

one desires and (12) Pancaupādānaskandha (The five grasping aggregates)

### (1) Jāti or Birth.

The term Jāti is of manifold connotation. In this treatise of the exposition of Aryan truth, by Jāti is meant all the events from conception of the being in the mothers womb until its emergence or extrusion. What is generally known as birth or “been born” (parturition) and the skandhas thereof. Jāti is suffering as it is the root of many other forms of suffering.

Jāti brings in its train <sup>51</sup> “dukkha,” <sup>52</sup> “Viparināma dukkha,” “sanskāra dukkha,” “Praticchanna dukkha.” “Apraticchanna dukkha,” “paryāya dukkha” and “Nishparyāya dukkha.”

Headache, earache, toothache which are bodily diseases and, melancholy feeling engendered at the loss of property and separation from the beloved come under “dukkha.” suffering consequent on the cessation of pleasurable feelings is “Viparināma dukkha.” Neutral feeling and <sup>53</sup> triple - grounded sanskaras (mental formations) affiliated thereto being stigmatised by coming into being and then regressing, falling apart, are termed” sanskāra dukkha.”

Earache, toothache, burning type of sensation felt at lustful thoughts and quite the similar sensation for thoughts of hatred, are, by their very nature, cannot be known without being

51. Same explanation as in

52. This has the same meaning as the same term you met before, but it has a slightly special meaning as would be explained later.

53. sanskaras that arise simultaneously with the three different types of feelings, dukkha (painful), sōmanassa (happy or pleasurable) and upāyāsa (neutral) feelings.

revealed or told and there's no other way of their being divulged. They are "praticchanna dukkha" meaning suffering that is veiled or <sup>54</sup> "Veiled - suffering" which is a fairly good English rendering for "Praticchanna." Cruelties such as beating or clubbing, knife - stabs and sword - slices are forms of suffering that can be known without being told or heard and the method of infliction is very clear. Thus this form of dukkha is named "Appratichanna dukkha" meaning "unveiled," "transpired" or "substantially - visible" dukkha.

Except for dukkha as aforementioned, and as enumerated in the Vibhanga, all the rest of the sundry suffering already brought forth above are collectively nominated "paryāya dukkha," since they mutually condition each other. "dukkha" as specially brought out previously, should not be misunderstood with the general dukkha or suffering, is exclusively classified as "Nispariyāsa dukkha" meaning suffering without a base.

Although it was aforesaid that Jāti is dukkha or suffering, birth or Jāti in itself is not suffering. If there is massive suffering to be undergone in the four hells and, also, if there is suffering in the <sup>55</sup> sugati as a result of being conceived in a womb or "conceptual dukkha" (garbhavakranti mulaka dukkha), suffering would not be present if the being were not to be born. Suffering appears only with Jāti or birth. Therefore, as Jāti in itself or naturally is not suffering, it is suffering inasmuch as it is the food on which the devil of suffering becomes apparent. Dukkha in hellish realms is aforementioned. The suffering in sugati such as suffering which is the natural outcome of conception should likewise be known.

54. The clause has been added by the translator.

55. Realms of brahmas, devas and human beings. Here it refers mostly to the human realm.

One, who is born in the mother's womb, is not conceived in a flower chamber or, gold or silver relic chamber. One is being conceived in the lower part of the mother's abdomen surrounded by two carapaces scattered with entrails, in a space highly incommodious like the <sup>56</sup> "Lokāntarika purgatory," much to the discomfort of the being, a repulsive place just as much as the "Gūtha purgatory" (another purgatory like lokāntarika), filled with gases foul-smelling and the being is thus conceived in a place tantamount to a cesspit in which a worm is born. Thereafter for ten months the being seethes and suffers in the heat of the womb, also, being unable to stretch its hands and feet. This is termed dukkha resulting from conception, "garbhāvakranti mulāka dukkha."

When the mother of the being to be born is sitting, standing, going and doing various other sorts of work, the being is wobbled and bruised like a kid under the clutch of a drunkard or a snake on a gypsy's hand. When the mother drinks cold water, the being under conception suffer as a one who is thrown into the Lokantarika purgatory, as a one who has been flung onto a burning fire pan when the mother drinks hot water and when the mother eats something sour and salty, the being suffers as if though he/she flung to the "Vetharani purgatory" which consists of rivers of salt water. This is also the dukkha rooted in conception. When the mother is undergoing surgical and other treatment, the type of suffering ensued in those instances is called "conception - rooted consequent suffering" or "Garbha Vipatti mūlaka dukkha."

When the moment of intrusion from the womb dawns, the being, the head turned down, from the gases produced from

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56. Type of purgatory encountered in Buddhist literature, where beings suffer for their past evil kamma.

the womb itself, is pushed towards vagina, which process the being feels sufferingly as a one crushed by a huge mountain. While the being is ejected from the tiny mouth of vagina, the pressure felt by the being is so harrowing that he/she feels as a one trapped between two rolling mountains in the <sup>57</sup> Sangāta purgatory.”

The new - born infant, just having emerged out of the womb, is washed and cleaned, at which instance it is felt by the infant like a fistula applied with salt and rubbed by a piece of rough object and so it suffers. This is dukkha rooted in emergence or “vahir nishkramana mulaka dūkkha.”

The suffering confronted by those who commit suicide at prime of their youth, those who reject food either out of wickedness or greed and those who picket on thorny mats in the mid - day heat with fraudulent unity is termed “dukkha rooted in the internal activity (of the mind)” or “Aṭmōpakrama mūlaka dukkha.”

If there's any suffering levied on the one by an external agency such as bruising, cutting and bonds of affection and enmity, it is epitheted “dukkha rooted in external procedure or activity.” or “Parōpakrama mūlaka dukkha” As for every above - stipulated dukkha, Jāti is the pivotal factor from which subsequent suffering ensues and thus can it be unhesitatingly concluded that Jāti is but suffering.

### **Jarā or Aging (senility.)**

Decadence of the skandhas or aggregates of the person is popularly referred to as Jara. When the life gets staled, hair on

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57. Again, this a type of purgatory meting out punishments prorata to those who have sinned.



the head and the body turn white. Teeth slacken and eventually fall. The skin becomes wrinkled and less colourful. Freckles and manifold dark spots make their appearance on the skin. Scales too appear on skin. Joints and arteries jut out. Spinal column shrinks giving a bent posture to the old. One's eye - sight declines and quite often gets blind. Ears no longer respond to sound and the one gets deaf. Taste no longer arrests the tongue of aging old men and women. Things done and things to be done are easily forgotten. Intelligence wares away. Off and on the aging man/women is out - witted. Lots of mistakes are made. There's a drastic downfall of physical strength. Hands and legs begin trembling. Even, children despise old - haggardly people. Although, aging does not naturally impose sorrow and affliction, one who is weighed down by aging suffers mentally as well as physically. For all this physico - mental suffering Jarā is the *piece - de - risistance*. Therefore, it should be categorically pin pointed that Jara is suffering, a massive dukkha to be borned.

For the old man, coming to a seating position from the sleeping position, and thereupon coming to the standing position from the seating position involves a quite a bit of suffering in the form of jerking..... etc. While walking a scanty distance, the old person suffers many bodily pains that have naturally arisen. His positioning of the foot being flawed, at very many times, he falls down. Having fallen down in such and such a way, he suffers fractures of bones that levy on him no small amount of pain. The fact that he is unable to do any work to earn a pittance and fend for him is also a piece of suffering. The inability to eat food items he relishes in the usual way is further suffering. The incapacity to protect and safesuard his property and generally what he owns is also, still more, suffering or dukkha. While being in an incapacitated condition, having to

endure jibing and ridiculing of others is yet another form of suffering. Having to face the arrogance of lovingly fostered kith and kin, so also to be neglected by them, too, causes heavy suffering. There are a multifarious number of suffering owing to ageing.

### **Marana or Death.**

Death is two - fold. One is the instantaneous death and the other is usual, or conventional "death." It is this "death" that people usually consider as death when conversing or talking. Instantaneous rise and fall of aggregates, of name and form, the fall that takes place in name - form after having risen is known as instantaneous death. The cessation that takes place of the aggregates, name - form of one generation accompanied particularly by the disintegration of <sup>58</sup> *Jīvitendrījya rūpa* is called "usual death." It is to this death that we advert to in sentences like "man died," "boy died" and "cow died" .....etc. Though both types of deaths are suffering - inducing, in this Aryan - sermon, we are particularly concerned with the second type of "usual" "conventional" death <sup>59</sup> which is recognised alike in East as well as in the West.

The conventional death is further subdivided into four. To wit, *Āyukkhaya marana* (death due to the expiration of the life span), *Kammakkhaya marana* (death due to the exhaustion of reproductive kammic energy), *Ubhayakkhaya marana* (death due to the simultaneous exhaustion of the expiration of the life span and reproductive Kammic energy) and *Upacchedaka - karma marana* (death due to the opposing action of a stronger karma unexpectedly obstructing the flow of the reproductive

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58. See the discussion on *rūpas* at the beginning of this treatise.

59. Added by the translator.

kamma before the life - term expires). Each of the genuses of being has a time limit beyond which those beings cannot continue in life further. This is termed maximum time - limit or "Ayusha." "Having surpassed this limit, beings can no longer flourish due to the decay, diminution and deterioration of physico - mental faculties. Accordingly this type of death is typified "Ayukkhaya." Prior Kamma is, like ayusha, is a factor by virtue of which men/women exist. A powerful karmic force is immanent with energy that makes a person live substantially longer. By contrast, a weak force of Karmic energy is incapable of making a person to live substantially longer. Those who inherit weak karmic forces, like a lamp the flame of which goes off for want of oil while the wick, the surrounding atmosphere remains unturbulent, die by the consummation of the feeble reproductive karma when the āyusha is still not worn away. This type of death is "Kammakkhaya." Some die simultaneously owing to the expiration of life - span or ayusha and the utter inadequacy of the reproductive karmic force. This type of death is known as "Ubhayakkhaya." Some people though possessing ayusha and strong kamma, yet die of sudden, unexpectedly arisen occurrences. This type of death is called "Upacchedaka."

In spite of the fact that the disintegration of the *Ī vijtendriyā rūpa* in itself is no pain, in whichever above form death may come, death occurs for the victim of it by finally torturing him / her in varied ways. Therefore, death in entirety is hefty suffering. When the death approaches on the person, his body feels, like being bludgeoned from the effect of the gases that have been exasperated quite like provoked snakes, as if though being cut a-part by sharp knives, being gored by spears and arrows, being crushed at the same time the body being thrown about hither and thither, being consumed by an

inferno like fire, hands and legs being transfixcd, flesh being torn apart and thus body of the dying thrashed and bombarded. So also, as death cometh still closer, a thick layer of phlegm clogs the chest and after which blocks the respiratory passages partly or rather to a great extent asphyxiating the victim of death. Thereby the victim has to exert a larger part of his energy to breath, however hard and scantily it may be. When the person at the forefront of death inhales and exhales with no small sound, <sup>60</sup> it is said to be the last attempt to live and it resembles the situation of the drowning man catching at a straw in the last moment before being innundated. When such an onslaught of phlegm is aggravated, the pain felt by him (the victim of death) is immense and, to use, another term, is helplessly excruciating.

While <sup>61</sup> Anapindika, the Buddha's chief benefactor was laying destitute on the death - bed, Ven. Ananda, the chief attendant of the Buddha and Ven. Sāriputta one of the two chief disciples visited Anapindika. Ven Sāriputta inquired of his circumstances. Whereupon this illustrious gentleman replied, "My lord, ven. Sāriputta! As if though a strong person is hitting me with a hammer, gases oppress my head. As if a powerful man is squeezing my head with a strap, it, by gases, is thoroughly obfuscated. As an able butcher is slicing beef with a pointed, sharp instrument, so my abdomen is paining. As if by two strong men, a weak one was hauled and put onto a pit of charcoal and pounded therein, I am aflamed and burnt likewise. <sup>62</sup> Such a fortunate and supremely privileged, wealthy gentleman who had become Buddha's chief benefactor and

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60. Added by the translator.

61. This name means "Supporter of the orphans." He was named so as he was of a charitable disposition.

62. Added by the translator.

thereby had innumerable occasions to associate Buddha and his prominent disciples, nay is this all, the Jétavanarāma which Anāpindika built became the place most frequented by Buddha and the multiplicity of his retinue. If such a great personality as Anāpindika suffered such massive pain and agony, what is there to comment upon the death - bed suffering of ordinary masses like us?

Overwhelmed by much pain, the victim of death, at this point of time, develops a fear towards death. There's no other fear as frightening as this. The extremely ghastly death, like a towering fire burning the heart, inflames the mind of the victim. If the victim, being consumed with bodily pain and reminiscent of a god, happens to be a one who has mostly sinned, his fear is even more intense. At the moment of death, his (her) own karma itself shows him (her) hellish realms of existence. He (her) sees an inferno coming to him and embracing himself. He sees macabre denizens of hells coming to pull him off. When the victim sees such evil visions on the death bed, urine and faeces are ejected.

Notwithstanding whether one is to be reborn in a happy realm or an unhappy realm, a dukkha that everyone has to face is the separation from the beloved and entities that one holds dear. This generates sorrow. The person who is dying has to leave behind what he so endearingly safeguarded such as wealth, money and property and what he, with of course great attachment, loved, such as the family, relations and friends. This is an unbearably a sorrow inducing situation for the dying. One who keeps on crying until the lapse of several days and, perhaps, moans for months and years merely for the bereavement of a family member, can (such a one) stand his impending separation from virtually everything he owed, cared

for and loved? Certainly not. The melancholy that transpires in the dying at the final death-bed scenario is as raucous as a fire that enters the heart and burns it to pitch - darkness. Thus, as death in its wake brings so devastating physico - mental tribulations, the death, disintegration of *Jīvitendriya*, is the most feared of all suffering. People fear death more than they fear anything else. They risk anything to evade or escape death.

#### **4. Shoka or sorrow.**

The mind - arson consequent to the destruction of gold, silver, precious stones and property, which are so dear to oneself, by the death of one's family members and various injuries that they come upon and diseases by which one is harassed is known as *shoka* or "sorrow." This is also one of the multiple forms of suffering entailed by the wanderers in the *samsara* (*samsāric* beings). Greater the one's attachment for the object about to be extinct, greater would be the sorrow thereby ensued. If a very enthusiastically cherished object gets destroyed or a very much beloved person passes away, the heart is ravaged as unto a red hot knife-edge to which the chest is brought into contact and as when the heart is consumed by a furious fire. In such instances, the heart - ache is so devastating that on certain occasions some vomit hot - blood or such passes out from anus along with faecal matter. Being unable to bear the ache with patience, some become insane. Some beget diseases. Some commit suicide by cutting their throats, some hang themselves, some offer themselves in the railway track, some drown themselves and some set themselves on fire. Not only does a person come across a single case bereavement but also many bereavements and destruction of property at the same time. When one single loss or bereavement confronts a person making him susceptible to committing suicide, how

much more sorrowful would the person be when he or she is confronted with wholesale destruction of property and separation from several of his or her beloved ones?

## **5. Paridēva or Lamentation.**

When misfortune befalls a person, as for instance, the death of a parent, son, daughter or a relative, he (or she) laments saying, O! What has happened to you?! How can we ever be without you! What a tragedy has come upon us! Thus, with the utterance of these, with tears dropping from his eyes and drooling and thundering about crying and mourning are categorised as parideva or lamentation. Though crying in itself is not a form of suffering, it forces, by and large, the mourner to acts of beating him-self or herself, thrust his (her) head onto walls and roll on the floor while crying, and all these entails heavy suffering. Therefore the exalted one affirmed “parideva” as a manner in which suffering manifests.

## **6. Dukkha - dukkha or pain.**

By Dukkha - dukkha is meant unpleasant or unpleasurable feelings that occur in the body, internally and externally. Birth was mentioned as dukkha as it was a pre - requisite to subsequent “pain.” Bodily pain results in both physical and mental displeasure. One is himself or herself a heap of suffering and is therefore of a painful nature.<sup>63</sup> Dukkha - dukkha though translated conventionally as pain, it must needs be understood as “huge pain.” A being is subjected to a plethora of internal pain brought about by an imbalance of gases and external pain. Pain in head - headaches - is engendered by the

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63. Partly framed by the translator.

improper balance of gases. In eyes, ears and teeth sometimes excruciating pain surfaces. In the tongue, throat, chest, back, shoulders, entrails, diaphragm, hands, legs, joints, bones, flesh and arteries pains of varied sorts show up. When the paths of urination and ejection of fecal matter get closed or blocked, very raucous, life - threatening, massive pain ensues. Women have to suffer labour pains. So also, pustules and fistulas bring enormous pain in their train. A lot of pain also result when fistulas are being fed upon by worms. These are all internal pains.

There is also a plethora of external sources which cast suffering, like a net, on the body - mind aggregates. For a human being suffering is enforced by having to stand in the hot sun, by being burnt by fire, by being stricken and obstructed by stony, rocky ridges and also pains are levied by heavy fruits, branches of trees, trees themselves, houses and walls falling upon them and collision with vehicles. Still heavier a pain is dealt by been struck with stones, staves, knives, hatchets, swords, arrows and gun - shots. Further, pain is also greatly inflicted when having stung by scorpions, snakes, bitten by dogs, eaten by lions and leopards. When thrust with the horns of goats and bullocks, crushed by tuskers and kicked by bullocks and horses pain ariseth. So also, pain doth arise by being bitten by bugs, fleas, mosquitoes and flies. To get caught having stolen something, to be caught for what one did not commit, to stay in house arrest, to be lashed, to be beaten, to get one's hands, legs, nose, ears, head severed and to be charred, infuse one with immense pain. To be apprehended by a bunch of thieves and to be coerced by progressive beating to submit where one's wealth is or to be, in higher degrees, injected with pointed instrument, else, to be cut and chop in greater degrees confereth one colossal magnitudes of pain and suffering. These



are only but a few types of pain encountered by people. People cannot stay in the present state of existence for ever. Sinners have to go forth to hell and experience more than million - fold pain. Of such suffering reader should meditate. Do I still need to evince that pain is suffering?

## 7. **Dōmanasya Or Grief.**

Mental distress is known as “Dōmanasya” or grief. When lovingly fostered children of one's become arrogant and to be neglected by the very children, when also caressingly fostered wife of one desires another man and become contemptuous, when one is scoffed at by others, when one's children are suffering, when one fails exams, when one is disfigured, one's voice falters and becomes a pauper, and, when one cannot perform successfully what others do and thousands of other things create grief in humans. Massive grief fructifies when, one having become a pauper, sees one's former friends and relatives pass by with wealth and luxury in cars and such other vehicles. One, rich or poor alike, in one life -- time meets an unquantifiable amount of grief.

## 8. **Upāyasa or Despair.**

<sup>64</sup>Upayasa is extreme mental tension and agony. <sup>65</sup>Its closest English rendering being “despair.” Despair has its provenance in mental tension generated by the death of one's closest relatives. The victim of despair, without crying or praising the dead, just looks on. He neither drinks nor eats. Sometimes he is subjected to unconscious fits, and perchance

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64. Added by the translator.

65. Added by the translator.

dies by been parched. Again, though despair in itself is not suffering, yet, as it acts as a source of mental and physical suffering, Lord Buddha affirmed it as fraught with suffering.

### **9. “Apriya samprayōga dukkha” or Getting together and coming into contact with what is detestable.**

Meeting detestable objects and abominable people is encapsulated in the phrase “Apriya Samprayōga Dukkha.” Objects such as dirt and refuse, phlegm, mucus, feecal matter and urine that are repulsive to look at, sounds that are repugnant to hear, foul, fulsome, smell, bitter tastes and whatsoever other object producing abhorrence upon contact is generally considered by man as obnoxious. Although these objects in themselves are not suffering, yet they bring in their train bodily and mental suffering upon seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting. Thus, such objects are impregnated with suffering. Detested people are those who are one's enemies and/or those whose ways of speaking and other activities one abhors. Having to stay and work with such people are also “Apriya samprayōga Dukkha.” Being enforced to get together with repulsive people is not suffering by itself, but as aforesaid in regard to other suffering - producing malefactors, it brings forth attendant physico - mental agony that makes up suffering. The wayfarers of saṃsāra have no escape whatsoever from “Apriya Samprayōga.” Even a king cannot avoid this fact, <sup>66</sup> nay common people.

### **10. “Priya Viprayōga Dukkha” or seperation From the Beloved.**

Separation from the one's hard - earned wealth and one's most cherished sons, daughters and wives is apperalled “Priya

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66. Added by the translator.

Viprayōga” dukkha. Wealth is something that becomes less and less by expending, being taken away or robbed by kings and thieves respectively, being consumed by fire and <sup>67</sup> floods. Even though some morsel of wealth happens to remain, yet death would certainly sever him from such wealth. Those who live with sons, daughters and whosoever other retinue will have to separate from them by going to reside in a far away place, or by his retinue going to live in a distant place or death to either. The wanderer in saṃsāra in every birth, under whatsoever conditions has to face “priya viprayōga.” Yet again, it is taken absolutely is not suffering but, as it is a resultant of suffering in body and mind, it is but suffering. The influence “Priya Viprayōga” wields is so stupefying that some get diseased, some others die and yet others commit suicide.

## **11. Suffering Engendered by Not - Getting what one wants.**

Human beings desire, crave and hope for a multiplicity of things. Beings by nature decaying expect to be non - decadent or non - senescent. Beings by nature prone to be diseased expect to be healthy through out their life: Uneducated soughts to be educated. Stupids crave to be wise. Poor seeks to be rich. <sup>68</sup> Those of inferior status hopes for superior status. <sup>69</sup> General public have hopes of becoming kings, presidents and prime ministers. Those deprived or needy of certain objects pine for them and those who possess such objects pine for more of them. Moreover, things for which men thirst for are abundant and many. Thereof even a thousandth part would rarely or not at be

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67. Added by the translator.

68. Slightly modified by the translator.

69. Sentence is enlarged for more descriptiveness by the translator.

acquired. Although this in itself is not suffering, yet, on account of its being a source of physico - mental frustration, it is perceived as “Dukkha.”

**12. “Pancopādanaskandha Dukkha” or suffering brought forth on account of the existence of the five - aggregates.**

Birth, ageing and death occur nowhere else but in this very five - grasping aggregates. The five grasping aggregates is the provenance from which all suffering emanates. Thus, the Buddha asseverated that the aforesaid aggregates permeating and pervading of the nature of suffering.

A human being is born with suffering. From time the human babe emerges, degeneration sets in and it is another aspect of suffering. While being victimised by degeneration - cum - decomposition he heads towards death. It is needless to say that death is but suffering. Betwixt birth and death one has to face sorrowful occasions, to cry and to come across situations of immense distress. On most occasions one can in no way avert incidences of “Apriyasamprayōga” and the inability to procure what one desires. Aggregates are suffering and besides aggregates there is nothing else one can name and attribute the individuality. Dukkha is and dukkha also is what ceases. In the skandha's there is no delight or satisfaction. This is how the fact of dukkha is described in “Vibhangapali.”

**Herewith the chapter on the  
“Fact of suffering” endeth.**

## **Dukkha Samudayarya Satya. Why Suffering Pervades the Worlds?**

It is established that corporeality, feeling, sensation, mental formations and consciousness; the five aggregates, arising in sensual form and formless realms, instantaneously degenerate entailing suffering which incontrovertibly is included in the first NT, that of the immanence of suffering or “dukkha.” Although the five - skandhas are incessantly breaking down or degenerating yet, they are spontaneously arising anew and this process of constant degeneration and uprise continues *ad infinitum* until the full - stop is placed to it by the attainment of Nirvana. Howsoever the skandhas deteriorate, their uprise cannot be devoid of a reason. There must certainly be lurking a reason. Regarding the manifestation of the suffering - fraught aggregates various people in the world bring out various reasons. If among the reasons ascribed there is an immaculate wholly accurate reason, it is the “Dukkha samudayarya satya.” The exalted one in expounding the cause thereof :-

**“Katamañca bhikkhave! Dukkhasmudayam ariyasaccam? Yāyam tanhā ponobhavikā nandirāga sahaḡatā tatratatrābhinandinee. Seiyāthidam? Kāma tanhā, bhava tanha vibhava tanhā. Idam vuccati bhikkhave dukkha samudayam ariyasacam.”**

“Monks! What are the dukkha samudayarya Satya? Some sort of craving makes the being repeatedly reborn, spiritually or external skandhas when they grasp on to mental and physical objects makes the being therein delightful and attached, whatever begotten, become, small, big, extinct, tasty or whatever makes attachment to them, they are categorised as kāmathrushanā (greed or lust), Bhava thrushna (craving for everlasting life), and Vibhava thrushna (craving for nihilism), the three of these components comprise dukkha samudayarya satya.”

## Craving and Its Ramifications.

By craving is meant the attachment of the human mind to upadanaskandhas like those of human, divine and brahma, to precious objects as gold - silver - pearls and gems, so also to foods, cloths and other extraneous objects. Craving is there especially in each individuality *sui generis*: as my eye, my ear, my tongue, my hair, my head, my hand, my pleasure, my concentration, my wisdom, my kindness, my sympathy, my effort; this craving is also manifested to each of the skandhas disparately. This craving is directed towards the whole aggregates in that when a person thinks “I should also, in this world, stay as an independent being (person). It (craving) is still more poignant when the whole skandhas are subverted to be a “soul.”

The passion or will to live in the world is partaken of by the worm in the cesspit and the spittoon up to the every <sup>70</sup> lay - person (advanced human beings). It is this passion or will that holds the five - skandhas in union. Amidst the sundry types

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70. Here the lay - person is stressed because there are saints who have no whatsoever desire to further the existence in the samsara.

of cravings, the most corrosive is the craving to sustain the five - spiritual aggregates. It is this very craving or "will" which is responsible for the renewed conditioning of the skandhas and their continuing in succeeding generations which is, in another sense, the maintenance of suffering. Piquancy of the craving for the five - spiritual aggregates would not properly be comprehended by merely attributing it to some such person. Piquancy of such craving can be fully contemplated by the loss of an object or person and the resulting mental perturbation experienced by the bereaved person. By the loss of an object which is trivial no mental disturbance follows. If a mediocre object of affection was deprived of, a mild mental tilt would ensue. If an object, too strenuously clung to, was lost, then pain that consequents it would be rather formidable.

More than the pain dissipated when a fond object was disappeared would be the when pain one's own family - member dies. If a part or an organ of one is severed the grief that results is still greater. Greatest would be the grief and sorrow when one knows that he/she is soon to quit the vale of tears. This is adjudged to be so because one loves oneself more than anything else.

Viewing in this fashion, attachment to the five aggregates is first and foremost, second comes the attachment to one's body organs, third comes the attachment to one's family members and the attachment to external objects becomes the fourth type of attachment. Just as the fire inherits the quality of producing smoke along with it, skandhas inherits the quality of engendering attachment or craving. Therefore skandhas are responsible solely for eliciting craving (*tanha* in Pali). It should not be upheld that craving results from a particular weakness of a person. Thus, it should not be jeered at anybody became of craving as a craver.

## **The Cause of attachment for suffering - the mass of Five Aggregates.**

The five grasping aggregates (upādānaskandha), for those who like and relish it, as was stated in the previous chapter on Dukkha that they (skandhas) oppress the person in various ways, create mental tension and rigidity from lust, hatred, delusion, birth, ageing and death, if so this (aggregates) should be one of dissatisfaction, consternation and despondence and not something to be relished. As the fact is such one must wonder what the reason which makes the skandhas a thing of cherishing and fixed attachment? Is it because simply there isn't any suffering in them? One must delve deep into this.

In these five grasping aggregates there is pleasure as well as taints. <sup>71</sup> Howbeit the factors of suffering, grief and despair supercedes those of pleasure - this is the *locum classicus* of the FNTs. If in something (like in the person of five skandhas) arises joy and delight, it is of pleasure made. If in something there arises grief, despondence, death.....etc., if it is of a nature of dissatisfaction and pain. The five skandhas are clung to because of its partly pleasurable nature. If it were preponderably solely of a pleasurable, satisfying nature, nobody would get disheartened with it. Nobody will ever be able to crush craving that arises in it. There are many Blessed ones like Buddhas who have reached the zenith of intellectual capacity, become despondent of the five amalgamated aggregates, crushed craving that is responsible for the joy and satisfied view of the skandhas. Those most venerated Buddhas did so since the skandhas were tainted with a despairing and lamentable nature.

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71. Added by the translator.



The five - skandhas is like a poisoned cake. While seeing the poisoned cake, one becomes joyous and happy. So also, while feeling the smell and tasting it, one is joyful and happy. Having eaten it, one may die. Else one may be subjected to massive suffering for months and years. Wherefore, it should be disliked, loathed, detested and rejected by throwing it away. These all are taints of the poisoned cake. Considering the pleasure and the taints of the cake, the taints, though so huge are veiled. Only an experienced analyst of the cake can afford to know it. The pleasure, though little, is over shadowed like a mirage. Everyone sees the surfaced pleasure of the poisoned cake. Henceforth, most of those who see it, by force of craving, preventing any mote of consternation, eat it and whereby die or come under massive suffering and grief.

As much as is present in the poisoned cake pleasure - cum - taints, so is it in the five grasping aggregates. Pleasure is the fleeting, unstable joy and happiness that is being experienced by the aggregates. Its taints are immense. One taint is that body incessantly wears away and hence it has to be regenerated with food. Ageing, death, imposition of diseases, having to experience pain on numerous occasions are all taints. Having to cry and lament the separation of loved ones and gratifying objects, having to grin and bear when one can't get what one wants are still other occasions when suffering casts itself engulfing the amalgamation of name and form.

The five skandhas are of a potential of making the person born in bestial states and thus bring in its train a conglomeration of intense suffering, nay it (skandhas) make the one born as a preta (an unholy ghost) and make the one suffer for thousands and millions of years, furthermore, the skandhas can also take the grasping person into purgatories of tremendous

suffering such as sanjiva and Kālasutra that makes the one suffer for billions of years due to the germs of soul - view (sātkāyaditthi) greed and pride; seeds of suffering lie smouldering under ashes: Those who have reached the dusk of the life - time, stands on a foundation which may send him to the beastial world or the world of pretas. The poison of soul - view, greed and pride are thousand times greater than the poison in the aforementioned cake.

This all pervasive poison is one of the prominent taints of the five - grasping aggregates.

Though many taints are present in the five aggregates, like in the case of the cake but they are veiled. These veiled oppression can be only kenmed by a person with penetrative wisdom. Others can never grasp the taints in the skandhas. Therefore human beings though their skandhas are multiply spotted with suffering, they never loose heart of passion toward the skandhas. Inasmuch as pleasure is largely manifested in the poisoned cake, so in the skandhas too, pleasure is transpired prominently. Therefore craving shoots forth with respect to the five skandhas. People takes skandhas an abiding entity and calls it "I" or "mine" and thus they are virulently obfuscated. This is the way in which craving is sustained in the tainted aggregates five.

In the world, there's nothing that comes to be only by a single cause. To the arising of the being, of five grasping aggregates, of Dukkha as a whole there are many, many causes. The main reason or cause of Dukkha or suffering is craving (Tanhā or Pāli). If craving be crushed or subjugated in its entirety of its multiple forms, though there are still in existence other sub - causes such as one's karma, therein one will achieve

the ultimate liberation from these <sup>72</sup> Dukkha - Skandhas. <sup>73</sup> Forasmuch as craving is present, there is no abscission from the string of suffering, no cessation of the flame of suffering. While the craving is present, karmas that form the basis for further rebirth cannot be brought to a termination. While, so also, when subsidiary karmas are present, craving cannot be brought to termination. When craving is shattered, the karmas that may show up in future skandhas intermingled with Dukkha too get shattered precluding the possibility of a re - manifestation of a future Dukkha - Skandhas. Therefore, the blessed one, in expounding the Ārya satya (highest truths), without much concern for the subsidiary karmas, brought forth and singled out “craving (tanha)” as the one factor conditioning the Universe of suffering (Dukkha - Samudaya satya.)

Here is the way in which craving conditions suffering; - from the worm that is born in the cesspit to the beast that is born in the Avīcci purgatory, every being human and god grasp onto the skandhas as an abiding, eternal soul, consider it as “mine” and “I” and thereby take it (skandhas) as noblest and most loved object. There's not a thing in all the <sup>74</sup> three worlds, which the one can exchange the “soul” for. At the outset it is in this fashion that craving arises. Thereafter craving surfaces with regard to the Upadānaskandhas so as to maintain and sustain it, to protect it from possible mal - effects. When forms and sound.... etc, make contact with one's sense doors or “Āyatanas”, craving emerges by way of apprehending them as pleasing,

72 = Panchaskandha.

73 = Something is added to this sentence by the translator by way of literary embellishment.

74. Human, god and brahma realms.

beautiful....etc. This is followed by additional craving to associate them (forms and sound etc.) further in the future. The five skandhas is not sustained because one likes it to be sustained, but must be sustained by a constant supply of food lest it (five - skandhas) would crumble. For those who like, forms and sounds, etc do not present themselves automatically or naturely as a result of merely wishing them. One is kept busy by searching for ways and means of obtaining those sounds and forms one desires by tributary streams of craving of "life asserting" and "pleasure inducing." The chariot of life driven by craving goes about searching for tools that are essential to continue living, destroys what are untoward to life and begets pleasures and gratifications through forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touch.

Prior to eating one plate of <sup>75</sup> rice, a human has to gird his loins and put his shoulders to many a no small task. First he has to set the field and plough it. Then to sow the seeds and look after paddy plants and protect them from wild animals. Still after he has to cut, thresh, dry, clean and again protect the cleared paddy in a store house. Thereafter he has to boil the paddy, dry them again, pound them, winnow them, to wash them and spur the fire. If anybody does not perform all these tasks, no rice results.

In order to cause a cloth to exist, similar procedure has to be traversed. To have a house to stay in, a hundred or thousand times of more energy than this has to be expended. To have one's energy thus invested is, to all intents and purposes,

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75. Rice is the staple food of Sri Lanka, Europe and American farmer may have to undergo no less tiresome task in the cultivation of wheat and corn.

a drudgery and gravely impregnated with suffering. Wasting energy instil terrible mental and physical pain.

76. At this point one, especially one in the west, might moot the point that how can all these activities be called suffering and arn't there a subjective element in considering these as suffering or non - suffering? The Buddhist answer would be howsoever suffering is present at least at the subconscious level. How could it be if one could obtain all the aforementioned entities without expending energy and toil and moil? Incidentally, if we ponder on the case of constructing a house for oneself, one has to face a lot of problems such as procuring of materials, seeing to the problems of workers, to get an architect of one's choice and to compromise the difficulties that arise among masons and carpentors..... etc. All these keep pricking at the deepest subatomic structures of the brain giving him great dissatisfaction though apparently one may maintain a genial face.

The procedures ventured on to acquire comforts do not always succeed. In fact most of the time they are attended with failure rather than success. By thus being unsuccessful, one is met by fits of depression and sorrow. Things acquired by hard work and effort wear away. Robbers and enemies grab, defalcate and embezzle those. Such instances produce lot of grief.

Reluctant to do the work which one has to do alone in pursuance of greater happiness and pleasure and guided by craving one finds a subordinate, a man finds a women and a

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76. This paragraph is added by the translator in anticipation of a controversial point of view which might be advance by some readers.

woman a man. Thus come to be husbands and wives. Having so found a subordinate, one increases his lot many times. Husband has to do a thousand things for the wife and vice versa. During the course of the current of life, the husband has to grieve for not being able to impress his wife and vice versa. These render them melancholy.

As time proceeds, they would get children, thereat, their craving would increase hundred times over. By realizing the work they ought to accomplish for their children in the present and foreseeably the unending tasks to be fulfilled in the future, they are assailed with immense distress and anguish. Sometimes, one child may catch a disease and while his <sup>77</sup> father goes about searching for medicine he hears another of his children has been remanded by the police for some mischief.

Now he has to decide which case to be reacted first and while he so reacts, he comes to hear that his field has been sabotaged by wandering bulls and cows. Now, being in a desperate situation, frustrated he goes about with no apparent direction and while so indulging he meets his creditor whose debtor he is and the debtor says "you have evaded me on a number of occasions and broken promises, now, I want my money." While he is being so blockaded by his creditor and having no way of escape, a messenger comes and says that his child is severely sick, no use of the medicine and summon immediately a doctor. For one who flounders on the marshy land of samsara, incidents of this sort are not rare. If one were to confront such a situation, how enormous can be the grief that is thereby aroused?

Moreover, by virtue of craving, kings fight with one another. Brahmins dispute among themselves. Husband

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77. Mother can also be substituted here or both father and mother.

embroils himself in conflict with his wife and vice - versa. Fathers quarrel with children and vice - versa. Mothers quarrel with her children and vice - versa. Brothers engage themselves in dispute with sisters. Relatives clash with one another. Friends wrangle with one another. Monks, too, squabble amongst themselves. While so contending some die. And still others even come to states of suffering exceeding death.

Nor is this all. Some prompted by craving travel through stygian, dangerous forests. Some, for similar reasons, cruise along rivers and the ocean. Also, some out of curiosity instigated by craving travel to the innermost recesses of the earth and soar as high as possible to the sky. Some armed with pistols and guns go to the war arena wherein domineers bombs, cannon fire and poisonous gases. Some kill themselves by taking poison. Some commit suicide by hanging themselves. Some put themselves on the railway track. Some die by severing their necks. Some drown themselves. Some shoot themselves. Some set themselves on fire. These are just a small drop of suffering prevalent in our world based upon craving. Let ye, who read this texts, conjure in your minds some such similar examples and understand the principle!

## **How craving Results In (Future) Misery?**

In the explication of the FNTs, the role played by craving in bringing about future rebirth is the deepest and the most profound aspect. May the following be read with great concentration, be questioned from experts and discuss with them in order to elevate the understanding thereof! If this is comprehended, one can said to have grasped the most profound spot of the FNTs.

This body is made visionable, touchable, massive and a weighty object by reason of it being composed by the four mahābhūtā rūpās of earth (pathavi), water (apo), fire (tejo) and wind (vayo). Besides these, there are some other subtle rūpas or qualities in the human body, that are invisible, untouchable, nonweighty. Just as current spread out in an iron bar, these qualities are laid in different parts of the body. Just as when the current is switched off no difference can be seen in the iron bar, so is with the body, when the subtle qualities are disappeared there's no difference seen in the body as it was.

Mind or citta flashes into existence with the help of six qualities belonging or categorised under the aforementioned group of subtle qualities. Viz.,

- (1) **Chakshū Dhātu** (quality of vision)
- (2) **Shotra Dhātu** ( " " hearing)
- (3) **Gāṇa Dhātu** ( " " smelling)
- (4) **Jīvā Dhātu** ( " " tasting)
- (5) **Kāya Dhātu** ( " " tactility or touch)
- (6) **Hardaya Vastu** " ( " " mind)

<sup>78</sup>Here “quality of vision” means the subtle rūpa or form in which vision dawns. Others should be likewise understood.

In the first chapter wherein “The fact of suffering” was elaborated in connection with rūpaskandha by Chakshū prasāda, Shōtra prāsada, Gāṇa prāsada, Jivā prasāda, Kāya prasāda and Hārdaya vastu rūpa, they described at length the same qualities as herein mentioned as “Dhātu.” Out of these six Dhātus, the mind most often arises conditioned by and associated with the heart muscle. Mind arises associated with chakshū Dhātu.....etc. When objects and sounds strike those Dhatus (elements).



Mind subsists on heart muscle not in the way a gem stone is in a box. Mind does not remain the same all the way. A mind that comes up does not last long even a one hundred thousandth part of the time taken by a one - batting of an eyelid. There is no other object that wears a way as fast as the mind.<sup>79</sup> The speed of thoughts for which mind is another alternate name, is ever faster than the speed of light. When a thought or a particular kind of mind dominates, no other mind or thought arises until the first thought ceases. While the first mind ceases another thought impression as if though bound to the first arises in rapid succession except in the cases of meditative trances keeping the mind in abeyance, during sleep, at awake and all other gestures and postures until the person attains Nirvana.

The mind thus sustained is likened unto a sound generated at the instance of a beating of a drum. If a drum were continuously beaten for a day, it is said that the drum - sound persisted a whole day. There is no voice whatsoever that even persists for a moment, nay the drum - sound. At the moment, when one takes the hand - off, having beaten the drum, the sound ceases to exist. But when sound exists uninterruptedly, one following the other, as a concatenation or chain, it is said that sound endures for a day. Forasmuch as mind or thoughts exist as a progression, one thought following its deceased predecessor and itself ceasing giving life to a fresh thought impression and one following the other like a cataract. As such we say that "mind exists" until we reach Nirvana.

Mind, that persists as a string of drum - sounds in state of acute flux like a river gushing thunderously from a mountain top. To do each work as is indulged upon by human beings, millions of thoughts get activated one after the other. To lift a

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79. Added by the translator.

hand in a state of relaxation one - hundredthousand of thought impressions would have to be chain - activated. To once again to bring the hand to a state of relaxation, a similar amount of thoughts have to be chain - activated. So also, to lift a foot and place it on the ground an equal number of thought activation is needed. When conversing with somebody, to understand a single word he utters, hundreds of thousands of thoughts are chain - activated. To be extremely, unfathomably fast is the nature of mind or "citta."

Mind is considered to be the instrument of knowing or apprehension. The knife, the instrument of cutting can cut anything else but itself. Likewise the mind, the instrument of knowing can know various other things but itself. Therefore human beings do not know the mind as it is or objectively. Mind, existing as a chain of drum - sounds, is taken by some to be an entity that remains unchanged and hence leading to the much mistaken conclusion of a "soul" or "personality." Thence, some after wrongly grasping the mind to be some sort of an enduring entity imagine it to be, like a bird that flies from branch of a one tree to that of another, going from one fleshy tabernacle (life) to another. Some others consider the mind as an object that ceases at death, like a flame blowing off. Whatever may be the proposition one may hold out of these two propositions, such a one can never comprehend and suck the essence of the Aryan doctrine. Therefore to fully draw in the Aryan thruth one must also know the *status quo* of the mind.

When the mind comes closer to or to the brink of putrefaction owing to a mutiplicity of causes such as senescence, lack of nutrition, imbalance of the four elcments,

seasonal changes, <sup>80</sup> poisoned foods and some emotional states such as anger, as a red - hot iron when put into a pail of cold water gets cooled, so are the aforementioned subtle elements (chakshu dhātu.....etc.), that cannot be seen and have no weight, ceases. In such a body there's no base in which mind can originate. Thus all action done by such a body also ceases at which point the person is pronounced dead.

If in the moment of death, which is also the time when the aforementioned subtle qualities of form or dhātus cease to exist, craving has been rooted out, then, the succession of thought - movements also stop and blows off for ever and aye. Thus, the suffering comes to an end. The person who is yet to attain Nirvana or Arhatship at the moment of death or departure from this world looks upon this world with dissatisfaction and the other world with some expectancy of satisfaction. With the expectancy to hear sounds unheard of before. To smell things unsmelt before. To taste things not tasted before. To touch tactile objects untouched before. To tarry long in saṃsāra as a particular person having not overcome the proclivity for tarrying in diverse worlds. These passions encapsulated in craving tied onto the mind current, exist simultaneously.

This craving directed towards objects to be met in future, travels with the <sup>81</sup>death - consciousness to several lives in the future. Although at the point of death, the dhātus upon which consciousness is based diminish and finally decay, since craving is mixed and simultaneously exists with the thought -

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80. Foods that contain unwholesome chemicals or high amount of fats that are detrimental in the long run.

81. Last thought movement arising before the death of an individual.

current, no cessation of thought current takes place. The being at the threshold of <sup>82</sup>death after having passed the last consciousness (death consciousness) in this life passes on to the rebirth or relinking consciousness according to karma performed in this or other past lives presented at the point of death as karma, “karma nimittha” or “gati nimittha.” The mind thus come to be is the first consciousness in second or after - life. It is known as the “rebirth” or “relinking” consciousness. The object of the relinking consciousness is born by the nature of karma and by the nature of the consciousness itself. From this point onwards the mind - current (bhavānga) is sustained upon that object.

Simultaneous with the dawn of relinking consciousness, there also dawns a bit of form (corporeality). This bit of form is invisible to the human eye. This is known as “morula.” This becomes the basis of what is to be the human body. This “Morula” together with the “rebirth” consciousness is not something descended or coming from the deceased person but something brought forth anew. But as the “rebirth” or “relinking” consciousness is something resulting from the generation of consciousness” of the deceased, the new born is also not any other from the deceased.

As morula is a soft and smooth thing, it needs a soft medium to position itself and a fertile medium to grow - spermatozoa is the ideal substratum. Consciousness (Vinnana) enters the womb through union of the sperm. In many other putrefied substratum, softness and fertility is overwhelmingly present just as in the sperm. It is because of this that in putrefied

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82. Refer Ven. Naradas “Buddha and his teachings,” p 260 - 270.

substrata some animals are born. Those who are ignorant suppose animals born in things like spittoons to be entirely born there of and non-existent earlier. Buddhism does not endorse the spontaneous birth of animals” No animals are born in clean places because, softness and fertility, two essential preliminaries for growth and reproduction, are absent.

However, there are some groups of beings that are born in clean places. Their birth constitutes the emergence of the being with full physiological body completion and the relinking consciousness. After having born, they have no growth. They are known as “spontaneously generated beings.” Hellish beings, unholy ghosts (pretas), devas and brahmas are the examples of spontaneously generated beings.

Consciousness or Viññana is a smooth, invisible and untouchable entity. The force of craving that is tied on the mind current is even smoother. It is also the case with the remnants of karmic forces that have resulted from meritorious or demeritorious volitions. The body of the newborn in new life is constructed by Vinnana (consciousness), Craving (Tanha or Thrushnā) and karma resultants or forces unleashed by volitions in the previous lives. These three causes act in unison and bring forth the body. However these alone without the help of such extraneous causes as seasonal changes and food cannot construct organic masses as our bodies. They (the above mentioned three causes) alone can only create a subtle or astral body. The bodies of devas, brahmas and other spontaneously generated beings are extremely subtle, even subtler than wind - moon's rays, sun's rays, fire etc. They are like objects that can be reflected in mirrors and water. They are invisible to the human eye. They cannot be touched by the human body. As their bodies are dependent on their minds, their bodies can

assume variety of shapes and sizes according to whatever they will. Their mind's behest hold supreme sway. Since their bodies are composed of the subtlest of dhātus, by mere intention they carry their bodies any altitude in space. Upon their death, their bodies blow off as a flame in a lamp. No dead body remains. Their clothes, houses, vehicles and all other paraphernalia are made up of dhātus extremely subtle not subjected to human cognition.

Having seen the lamentable status of the body, those who have reached ecstasies transcending the craving for form are born in brahma realms wherein only vinnana pervades. Since they have no craving for form and established themselves in trances opposing form, no body get materialise for them along with the relinking consciousness. Their consciousness alone pervades in space. They are called “beings without form (Arūpee satva).” Those who, after having seen the tainted nature of mind, meditate and achieve trances in opposition to mind are born only in form, in realms of form. They are called “senseless” beings. When the inherent power of the trance recedes, they will experience the usual flow of thoughts.

In beings such as humans in that no perfect body appears along with the relinking consciousness, the morula, which initially forms, grows by such factors as seasonal changes and food culminating in a perfectly grown body. The body that is being formed is influenced by craving that is tied on to the mind current, contributions made by union of the parental cells and seasonal changes and the type of food. Various bodily organs are formed according to the sheer force of craving, such longing to see things in the world producing the eye and to hear various sounds producing the ear....etc. The nature of the body is in accordance with the parental cells (dhātus) that unite. Charac-

teristics of the body, its advantages and disadvantages, result from nature of parental cells participating in union, seasonal changes and food and karma. In women craving arises in conformity to their own peculiar likings and ditto of men. Peculiar passions of the craving of women act as provenance of a woman body and a body of a man is provenenced by peculiar passions of men. Since the craving of men is along peculiar masculine fashions, a man will be reborn a man and women's craving is after peculiar feminine fashions, a woman will be reborn a women. It is only rarely there's a sex change upon rebirth.

Although certain parts of the five aggregates and certain peculiarities have as the reasons of their origination something other than craving, yet, if the relinking consciousness did not cease, it would result in a new birth only by virtue of craving and thus craving is the cardinal reason that ushers in the regeneration of skandhas in a new life. Since the five aggregates oppresses the one who attaches to them in multifarious ways, they are a source of suffering. Materialisation of the five skandhas brings with it birth,, ageing, death, grief and lamentation. Therefore, it should be noted that birth ageing and death are also caused by the force of craving. But for craving, these manifold waves of suffering do not manifest. If there is craving, there is every certainty and without fail this five aggregates would show up. **Thus, craving is the creator of the world. There is no other creator than craving.** If there is any other person to whom the epithet of "creator" is ascribed, he should also have been a manifestation of craving. In the past, skandhas arose due to craving. So also were created by craving. And ditto with skandhas to be arised in the future.

Once the suffering - imbued five skandhas has arisen, in that poisoned tree of the skandhas appears the poisoned fruit of

craving. Sense organs such as eye and ear that are part of the five skandhas and extraneous objects as sounds and forms are food for craving. By the very poisoned fruit of craving another poisoned tree of suffering imbued five skandhas are regenerated. The tree thus produced again bears the poisoned fruit of craving. This craving once again produces the poisoned tree and vice - versa. So the wheel keeps on turning just like the seed produces the tree and tree the seed *ad infinitum*. This *status quo* continues into the endless future until one attains nirvana or arhatship. Thus, the exalted one, who found the cause of suffering, declared “craving” to be the cause thereof.

### **The Four ways in which suffering is inflicted**

In consonance with the “Patisambhida Magga Pāli,” There are four ways in which craving manifests itself. To wit (1) Āyūhanatthaya (2) Nidānatthaya (3) Samyōgatthaya (4) Palibōdatthaya.

#### **Āyūhanatthaya (creativity inherent in craving)**

The ability of the force of craving for assembling, creating and establishing the five skandhas fraught with birth, ageing, death, grief and lamentation is designated “Āyūhanatthaya.” The mind floundering in the terrain of ignorance regards the five aggregates to be of long duration, although the form dies, the ignorant regards at least certain parts of the five skandhas to be of lasting duration, of taintless while it is highly tainted, of pleasing nature when it is to the brim, one of displeasure and suffering. Thus far the ignorant attaches and grasps onto the five skandhas as an entity of pleasure, of as the most cherished of all objects and consequently its expiration as so fearsome as to render it the greatest cataclysm ever to befall on him.



All this leads to the ignorant's dire, exuberant effort to preserve the five aggregates at all cost. He (the ignorant) replenishes the depleted and worn - out tissues of the body by taking food. In order to bring forth new pleasurable feelings, he supplies himself with beautiful figures (rūpas) and sweet sounds. He also exerts himself in eliciting new sensations, mental concomitants (sankāras) and consciousnesses (viññanas). If there are activities resorted to by both humans and other beings both in day and night, those activities are directed to and done for the sake of the skandhas, more accurately to deriving pleasure via the skandhas. Those who perform acts of merit, do so mostly for the sake of skandhas to be begotten in a future life. In the world, those who do acts of merit for the sake of transcending the skandhas and achieving the summum bonum of Nirvana, if there are any, are rare indeed. Since beings are engaging in activities that procure for them a new group of skandhas, ie, new forms (rūpas), new pleasurable feelings and vinnanas, in the present as well as in the future, these beings are endowed with or beget new forms, feelings, sensations, mental formations and consciousnesses.

If there are suffering in the world, they have their provenance in these very five skandhas. As skandhas are the matrix of suffering, the skandhas are in themselves suffering. As skandhas are originated, simultaneous with it also arise forms of suffering such as birth, ageing and death.... etc. Therefore if there is any exertion on the part of the being to generate skandhas afresh, it is an exertion to renew suffering. Exertion to renew skandhas is an exertion to welcome suffering. Thus the being, having seen the blemishes and taints of the skandhas, having disheartened of it and eradicating the passion for the skandhas, although partaking of food and other essential needs to evade suffering in the present life yet that being does not do

anything to renew suffering in future life. He does not wish to be rejuvenated in future skandhas. If one is involved in actions that are directed towards setting in of new set of skandhas in the present and the future, one does so solely due to his deep seated craving. Therefore, the cause of the regeneration of new skandhas is craving. Accordingly, craving is called the main and primary cause or reason of accruing and creating a suffering bedrock.

But for craving that springs up alongside with the thought current, there is no god, brahma or Ishvara who supposedly create the skandhas. If there is really a creator god, such a god would also be a combination of form, feelings, sensation, mental formations and consciousness. This combination, like the one possessed by humans, is also a product of craving of the god concerned. The condition being thus, how could such a god ever create other beings? Such creator gods have no power or ability to create others. Craving alone has the (potency) potentiality of creating. Therefore it should be known that craving is the creator.

That craving is a power by which can be accomplished various tasks is an empirically testified fact known to intellectuals. If anyone has a passion to do something, restraining from doing that seems for him as oppression, making him ill at ease. Therefore beings strive to do what they like, those things which they have a passion for. Sometimes beings perform certain acts knowing that after performing those acts would bring great harmful effects on them. Beings are made oppressed when unable to do things of his liking and spurred onto do things that would bring baneful after-effects because in craving there is a force that thus activates the being. If there's no force in craving that prods a person to do things that call forth ill -

effects, then the person concerned would not do the work that cause patent harm. The force which impels one till one realises ones passionate desires are, by all intents and purposes, the generative power of craving.

The power of craving is evident to all. To say that being works is merely a conventional mode of speech. In the ultimate sense there's no "being." By virtue of craving when thoughts and volitions occur in chains, it is told that the being works in the conventional mode of speech. Those motifs of thought that are a part of the mind current, which culminate in work are a part and parcel of the *sanskāraskandha*. Just as craving creates those thought motifs constituting *sanskara* (mental formations) it also creates the rest of the *skandhas*. As much as craving creates feelings, sensations, mental formations and consciousnesses while still living, so does it create, immediately after death, with the help of other causes like *karma*, five *skandhas* four *skandhas* or <sup>83</sup> one of the *skandhas*. This is known as "reaching a future life" or "rebirth in the future" To the extent that there are beings in this world, they are all created by craving. The creator of all beings is but craving.

## 2. **Nidānatthaya.**

Craving's power of regeneration of new set of aggregates once the present *skandhas* get dissolved at death is known as "Nidānatthaya."

For one, who has shattered and eradicated craving, never to rise again, has no rebirth or rebecoming. One who dies with craving unexhausted reborn in the next life in the form of

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83. as in *brahmas* of the realms of form and formless realms.

five skandhas depending on the realm of existence in so short a time as the batting an eye - lid. This takes place life after life by the influence of craving. Craving causing five Skandhas to be reborn in life after life means presenting the being blanketed with craving with new aggregates, repeatedly acting as a causative factor in continuance of life. Therefore craving is said to be possessed of the quality of "Nidanatthaya."

### **3. Samyogatthaya (Bonding capacity of craving)**

The capacity of craving for not allowing the saṃsāric being to transcend the suffering of the five aggregates to reach Nirvana and consequent bonding (attachment) of the aggregates to the saṃsāric cycle of suffering is known as "samyogatthaya."

So long as a being regards the five aggregates as a source of pleasure, thus long shall his mind be tied onto the five - aggregate - based suffering, in as much as a cow tied onto a tree with a rope cannot step beyond the rope, so is the being wedded by the bond of craving to the five - aggregate - based saṃsāric suffering been prevented from reaching the oasis of Nirvana. As much as the cow tied onto the tree by means of a rope, after having reached the end of the rope, comes once again close to the tree, so is the being having died in the present life, (he) takes upon a new set of mind - matter aggregates belonging conventionally to the future life. The being concerned is thus delimited to the group of skandhas on account of craving. Craving is like a cord tying the aggregates in unison. It is owing to this reason that craving was aforementioned as a bond that fastens the being that is the five skandhas. As long as the craving so binds the being, no escape from suffering is possible.

The cord of craving that binds <sup>84</sup> beings to skandhas is very strong and robust. Severing it is an onerous task, it can be severed only by the weapon of wisdom. No other weapon can sever it.

There is a very pious devotee who performs acts of merit wishing that he may attain nibbana (Nirvana) shattering the bonds that tie him to saṃsāric suffering. To this devotee visits a person who has the power and potential to make beings attain Nirvana, and addresses him thus; "friend! You have been arduously wishing for Nirvana, I have come to grant you your much wanted wish, come with me, I shall make you attain nibbana today. Thereupon, the devotee's would be, "O! Reverend sir! I am not prepared to attain Nirvana right now, I have some obligations to be fulfilled. Having fulfilled those obligations, I shall be ready later to go with you." If the reverend visits this devotee with some obligations to be fulfilled after ten years, the devotee would present the same answer, so to speak. Though ardently wishing for Nirvana, yet the devotee gave such an evasive answer due to the stringent, raucous, rasping and corrosive nature of the rigidity of craving. It is difficult indeed to unfasten the bonds of craving. There is nobody whosoever who would deliver anyone to Nirvana even though a being wishes for it. <sup>85</sup> Buddha and his noble disciples only show the way unto Nirvana. What is heretofore mentioned is an example to illustrate the rigidity of the bond of craving. By the aforesaid parable, the stringent nature of craving should be discerned.

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84. Here it does not say that there is a separate being apart from the skandhas but "beings represented as skandhas."

85. This sentence is added by the translator.

#### 4. **Pali-bōdatthaya.** (obliteration of the path to Nirvana)

The nature or quality of craving that obtrudes the noble path of the one who has ventured on after having convinced of the suffering based building of life is stipulated “Palibōdattahya.” In another sense obliteration of the path ahead to Nirvana by repeated arousal of defilements also can be called “Palibodattahya.”

Some people get dispaired of suffering by discourses of wise sages, which elaborates on taints of the five aggregates and benefits accrued upon attaining Nirvana. Some other people become dispaired of life after having experienced empirically the suffering inherent in samsaric existence. Some of these despondents of life, by temporarily ceasing to garner pleasures of the senses, determined to tread the noble path devote themselves to observing the five precepts, the eight precepts on uposatha (sabbath) days, to meditating in samatha and in vipassana and performing other meritorious deeds while being lay people. Still some other despondents considering lay-life as a state full of obstacles to attaining Nirvana go forth from home to homelessness after forsaking weath, family, relatives and friends to liberate themselves from the burden of suffering by practising the way of life adopted by Buddhist monks.

Of all these religiously inclined people, not at least one in a hundred can venture on continuously for a long time on their selected course of precepts and meditations. The reason being craving tiding onto them and betaking them once again to sensual pleasures which they sloughed upon undertaking meditative practice.

For the one who has resolved on abstinence according to the precepts and taken them up, following thoughts emerge; I want to eat delicious foods, want to dress flamboyantly, want to supply myself money, provide the wife with certain necessities and similarly want to provide the children with their necessities. These sort of thoughts dominating the abider - by - the precepts, they have the effect of leaning his mind towards a livelihood that suits such craving dominated thoughts, thereby relaxing his practice of precepts by these “craving - partisan” dharmas or norms.

“Whatever that can be done, can be done only by the one who lives for a time with health and strength. If died nothing would be able to be accomplished. If diseased, the same state of affairs obtains. Therefore money has to be begotten to acquire the accoutrement of life. If a lay person, one's family has to be provided for and see to their well - being. Making one's family suffer is a sin. Providing for one's family and striving for Nirvana do not go together, if both pursued together, either wouldn't be done properly. Therefore precepts - cum - meditation needs be executed after laying down the burden of family life” are some craving induced-propelled discourses spurred on by craving dominated thoughts. The person who starts by resolving to observe precepts on every uposatha day, once the uposatha day dawns, deterred by aforesaid craving dominated thoughts, eases his mind and postponing the observance of precepts, goes to do some other work. Sometimes, the very same person due to the obfuscation caused by craving skips observing precepts for several uposatha days. Yet perchance may even do away with observing precepts altogether. Still, perhaps after being influenced by craving dominated impulses and therewith settling the mind goes on to commit what are professedly sins such as taking lives

of living beings..... etc. This is how craving obtrudes the lay person on the Buddhist path of purification.

The craving dominated impulses piled up in the subconscious strata of the mind of one who has gone forth from home to homelessness or has entered the Buddhist priesthood, as time passes, make their impact visible. The mounting craving, just as in the case of the lay person, taxes the observance of the disciplinary rules of the Buddhist monk. The monk, who for a certain period of time, observes rigidly the rules of monastic discipline, lapses from his high estate and relaxes the strict disciplinary conduct by thinking in consonance with the craving dominated impulses, "No need of strict discipline, it is enough to go with the flow of the times." Thus the monk gives up worshipping the<sup>86</sup> tripple gem in the morning as well as in the evening, eats and drinks as he wishes, passes the day with worldly involvements and sleeps well into the morning till the sun light has showered the world. The monk, who as such relaxes his monastic policy, is carried away by a further lot of craving. When craving crushes him thus, he thinks, "Monkhood can never be maintained unless there's money," so, he starts dealing with money. As time flows he even starts to take food in the noon (night) by considering himself as being sick. So also he forsakes some more precepts. Without even stopping at this, he de - robes and becomes a lay - man. This is all the way in which craving obliterates the path of the Buddhist monk. Thus as craving stands in the way or blocks the path of the one who is desirous of or already on it, it (craving) is said to be immanent of "palibodattaya."

If in something there are the qualities of Aryuhanattahya (assembling of suffering), Nīdānatthaya (repeated fructification

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86. The Buddha, his doctrine and his community of disciples.



of suffering), sanyōgatthaya (bonding with suffering) and palī bodatthaya (standing in the way to end suffering), that is the real cause of suffering (Dukkha). It is called the cause of suffering (samudaya satya) or the second noble truth. All these four qualities are present in craving (Tanhā). Other than in craving these qualities can nowhere be found. Therefore the exalted one, the champion of truth, solemnized craving as the real cause of suffering.

**Here ends the chapter,  
“The cause of suffering (Samudaya satya).”**

## The Cessation Of Suffering (Dukkha Nirodharya Satya)

**“Katamanca bhikkhave, dukkha nirōdham ariyasa-ccam?  
yo tassāyēva tanhāya asésavirāganirōdho cāgo patinissaggo mutti  
anālayo idam vuccati bhikkhave, dukkhanirodham  
ariyasaccam.”**

The exalted one has thus discoursed on the third noble truth, “the cessation of suffering” as follows: “Bhikkhus! What is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? If there is complete, without sediment, eradication of craving impulses due to treading on the noble path, if something is done in the way of totally destroying craving, if there is shattering of craving so that it shall not resurface or manifest, if there is no - attachment or bonding with craving, Bhikkus! This I call the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.”

It has been pointed out in this discourse that the deracination of craving, which is the cause of suffering, so that it shall never reborn or re - emerge (Niravashēsha Nirōdha) as the truth of the cessation of suffering (Dukkha Nirōdha Satya). The shattering of the already born mental formations or activities (sanskāra) is also termed “Nirodha” or cessation. As craving is one of the sanskaras, it too undergoes cessation along with the sanskaras. However, here “Nirodha” is not intended

to be as such, but the cessation (Nirodha) of all forms of cravings that are to be born. This cessation is expressed in several synonymous terms, viz, “Niravashéssha Nirodha,” “Anutpāda Nirōdha” and “Niravashéssha prahāna.” If one is non - attached sans craving to one's wealth, family, body, objects of senses such as forms and sound, and if one can be free of sensual desire despite staying with a goddess - like nymph on the same bed, the state of non - craving, the one enjoys, should be considered as “Niravashéssha Nirōdha.”

A being would not have totally escaped from suffering unless the five skandhas extinguish although the being has freed himself from craving. If the five aggregates dissociate with craving remaining, which relatively forms a small part, suffering would not be poignant. What the person oppressed with suffering needs is the relief from five - skandhas - based suffering. The blessed one pivoted his sermons on the theme of craving, in spite of on defilements and aggregates, for the purpose of indicating the way leading to the cessation of suffering simultaneously with the truth of the cessation of suffering (Nirodha Satya). For, when the craving based cause of suffering exists, its effect or fruit (suffering) cannot be dissociated. Even if some smidgen of suffering is effaced with great effort on the part of oneself, that very suffering resurface because the cause of that smidgen of suffering does exist. On the whole, suffering ceases eternally if its cause, craving, is eliminated. Therefore, the unmistakable way of terminating suffering is the putting an end to craving - the cause of suffering. When the cessation of suffering is explained and elaborated in terms of the cessation of craving, it amounts to an explication of the way leading to the cessation of suffering along with the cessation of suffering (Dukkha Nirōdha Arya satya.)

When a fertile tree is cut and destroyed, the seeds that are to give rise to another tree also get eliminated. For, seeds are also a part and parcel of the destroyed tree. Destruction of the seeds is inseparable from that of the tree. Even so with the cessation of craving there gets terminated the whole mass of suffering. The suffering or Dukkha is tied on to craving and is inseparable from it, just as much as seeds to the aforesaid tree. Thereby it should be known that rooting out of craving not only eliminates craving but the whole lot of suffering as well. And this is but “Nirōdha satya.”

## Nirvāna

The Nirvana, the summum bonum of Buddhism, which Buddhists wish for and strive to attain in here or there, it is this very “Dukkha Nirōdhaarya satya.” Nirvana, as some are bound to think, is not a valueless, devoid - of - pleasure, should - not - be - wished - for, a fearsome empty thing but an extremely subtle, sublime form of pleasure value of which cannot be adequately expressed in worldly terms. It is a happiness unborning, non - senile, indestructible and eternally pervading. It is a thing unmixed with Dukkha or suffering. As it is beyond cognizance of the five senses and the mind of the normal people, it is a principle extremely subtle. It is a concept so huge and gigantic when considered in terms of the disintegration of suffering. A supramundane concept, a magnificent concept. It is also a concept non - positionable. Although not a single being resides in it, yet it is of the greatest refuge for all the beings.

In Nirvāna there's nothing that is a part of the skandhas. If this is so, it is a mere empty thing. It is not a negative quality of Nirvana but a very positive quality. On the whole even if

viññana (consciousness) is present in Nirvana it becomes fraught with suffering, as vinnana too is but suffering. Though Nirvana is devoid of skandhas, yet it is not devoid of happiness. In order to appreciate the happiness permeating Nirvana, the different types of happiness" should be understood.

## The Two Types Of Happiness.

There are two types of happiness in the world viz, kāma sukha and Vimukthi sukha where "sukha" stands for happiness. That happiness which obtains owing to objects of senses such as forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects and conscious apprehensions is termed "Kāma suka." To express in different words, the pleasure that arises in the mind due to sensual objects such as gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, money and attachment to one's family and friends is categorised Kāma sukha.

Getting freed from calamities and misfortunes that one have and will have to is known as "Vimukthi sukha."

Out of these two happiness' or pleasures, Kama sukha is tangible. Therefore it is also called <sup>87</sup> "Vedaita sukha" as well. Vimukthi sukha is intangible. Though everybody agrees with the fact that both are of happiness comprise, yet while speaking of Vimukthi sukha, instead of using the word "happiness" some other words are substituted which connote the same meaning. Hence a person's mind leans upon vedaita sukha whenever he hears the word happiness consequent upon which Vimukthi sukha is neglected. It does not occur to his conscience that there is another type of happiness. Not a mote of

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87. Vedaita = tangible, feelable.

vedaita sukha is present in Nirvana. Sheer Vimukthi sukha itself is Nirvana. A person gets disappointed whenever he hears "Vimukthi" as happiness as he is not accustomed to the fact that Vimukthi is happiness. He does not discern this fact. Else, when he hears of Nirvana, he mistake it to be vedaita sukha as well. To apprehend Nirvana as a form of happiness one must discern well "Vimukthi" as a form of hapiness.

To have a headache is a kind of suffering. After such, a sufferer cures himself by taking medicine, he utters, "I convalesced, released or liberated from the headache or simply, I got well." The three words "convalesced" "released" and "got well" connotes not three different meanings but, *per contra*, one. That one meaning is "happiness." This happiness is the "Vimukthi" or the liberation from the headache. However a word other than Vimukthi is used in expressing happiness with the result that Vimukthi is upheld unwittingly as happiness though not comprehended as such. This confusion is brought about by the usage of manifold words denotationally. When these facts are carefully considered and thought out, it will be seen that Vimukthi is also a happiness or bliss.

Between the two types of happiness, Kāma suka is that which arise with the mind when it apprehends a pleasurable object and is as momentary as a flash of lightning. It (Kāma sukha) does not last even a time interval occupied by a batting of an eyelid. Because of its high degree of momentariness, it is void of any value. As it is related to the skandhas, its pleasure is of an organismic nature. Whereas Vimukthi sukha is not something that goes off in a flash nor is it momentary even to a minor degree. Vimukthi after a headache lasts only till another headache arises. Vimukthi obtained upon attaining Nirvana is eternal and everlasting. When considered in terms

of properties such as lastingness, vimukthi sukha is by far the better and highly valued. Upon repeated concurrence of a particular Kāma sukha, one gets bored of it but this quality is not shared by vimukthi sukha. It is for ever relishing. Rejection of Vimukthi sukha is tantamount to clasping misery and suffering. As nobody likes suffering, Vimukthi sukha never gets boring.

In ancient India, in the city of Sākēta, a minister's wife contacted a headache and seven years passed away without the headache being cured. After the seventh year a physician named Jīvaka cured it. The wife being released of the misery of headache gave the physician money amounting to four thousand. So also her son and daughter in law donated the physician four thousand each. Her husband, too, being happy, gave the physician four thousand gold coins, slave man and a woman and also a horse driven chariot. If the relief acquired by the wife from the terrible headache is of minor importance and of no value, she and her kinsmen wouldn't have conferred the physician with such great wealth. Sixteen thousand gold coins were lavished on the physician because the "Vimukthi" that achieved was overwhelming. From this, it can be concluded that getting cured of a headache is worth sixteen thousand gold coins.

A wealthy person in the city of Rajagaha (Rajgir) suffered from an excruciating headache. After unsuccessful treatment by several physicians, he finally summoned the physician Jīvaka. Jīvaka after having diagnosed the disease, asked the wealthy gentleman that if he cured the disease, with what would he be rewarded? Then the wealthy gentleman replied, "Hon, physician! If you cured me of this disease, I would give you all my wealth and I myself would become your slave." The wealthy gentleman said so because the relief from disease is a greater gain than all his wealth. Considering

multifarious and manifold suffering experienced by beings inhabiting this world, a headache is something that is insignificant. There are sufferings exceedingly more painful than a headache. If relief from such a headache is greater than the whole of one's wealth, how much greater could be the relief of overcoming a much greater suffering than that? Amid sensual pleasures there are no as great and as worthy pleasures. Some make great sacrifices for sensual pleasures not because they are any worthy but because of delusion, solely propelled by delusion.

### **The supremacy of Nirvāna.**

Nirvāna is totally rid of sensual pleasure. Not a single sensual object can be found in it. Nirvana in itself is "Vimukthi sukha." Thus it can in no way be quantified. It is talked of as a refuge for worldly beings only in a conventional sense. So too, the value of Nirvana alias "Vimukthi sukha" can never be compounded. If a deadly disease, which can kill one in a matter of few days, is caught by one and there is a physician who can cure him of the disease, one desiring to live would freely give whatever he or she possesses to the physician in order to get oneself cured and thereby would get vimukthi (release) from death. If the patient happens to be a wealthy gentleman and if the physician, who is capable of effecting a cure, says that unless the wealthy gentleman gives him the whole of his wealth, he cannot cure him, the wealthy gentleman will, without whatsoever stint, give the physician all his wealth and get himself lifted up from the mow of death after having himself cured from a disease. From these facts it can safely be inferred that escape from a single death is as worth as the whole wealth a very wealthy gentleman possesses. If a person exists sans Nirvana, in the future and in various other lives, he has to face



not only one hundred thousand, million or a billion deaths but a number of deaths *ad infinitum*. If relief from a single death is as worth as a kingdom, how much more would Nirvana be worth, which liberates the one from an infinite number of deaths? How can one determine its worth in any way? So to speak. Even giving a single death a value of one cent, still the value of Nirvana cannot be compounded. By reaching Nirvana one not only terminates the suffering of death, but of all other forms of suffering that there be in the universe. Can one even reckon the value of the extirpation of the suffering incumbent upon death? No, impossible!

### **The Scope Of Nirvana.**

Although the conception of Nirvana is very subtle, yet it's of the greatest enormity. Examples are not abounding to show its enormity. Its enormity can be stated in accordance with the diminution of the suffering aggregates. The future time has no stoppage but flows on *ad infinitum*. If a being does not attain Nirvana, it will be born, small or big, in diverse forms of here or there for the entirety of future. No end can therein be found.

Therefore a single wanderer in samsāra has to face in the future unquantifiable, limitless kinds of sufferings as listed hereby; suffering of birth, suffering due to ageing, suffering resulting from disease, suffering incumbent on death, suffering owing to sorrow, suffering resulting from lamentation, suffering due to pain, grief and despair. Suffering arising from the communion with the disliked and separation from the liked. So also, suffering inflicted by being unable to get what one wants. There is also no limit of the sufferings that a being may undergo by birth in hell, bestial world and realms of the unhappy ghosts (pretas).

How large is the mass of suffering that the wayfarer in saṃsāra has to face, as large would be the Nirvana. How bitter is the mass of suffering he (wayfarer) has to face, as sweet would be Nirvana. How raucous is the mass of suffering for him, as smooth would be Nirvana. How horrid is the mass of suffering for him, as delightful would be Nirvana.

In this beginningless saṃsāra, a person, in the past, has had his full share of pleasure several times in this realm as well as in the deva realms. Albeit, these instances of pleasure are of no whatsoever consequence now. They are not even valued as much as dreams seen at night. Though one may come to experience wordly pleasures in future, their fate would also be identical to those of the past. Therefore wordly pleasures are of no essence. Per contra, the bliss of Nirvana, once acquired, would, for ever, remain immutable. The happiness and pleasure therein enjoyed would be of the greatest and the purest essence.

This very Nirvana, of supreme delight and pure essence, is being considered by some as something empty and not worth a cent, and only cling to sensual pleasure because they don't cognise the fact of suffering (Dukkha). If anybody comprehends the first noble truth, that of the infusiveness of suffering in everything compounded, he will also see the beauty of the beatitude of Nirvana.

## **How To Reach Nirvāna?**

Suffering mass of skandhas cease for each person not at once but progressively in five steps. When the meditative disciple striving for Nirvana attains to the state of sotapatti, he surpasses the conditions that make the skandhas born in hell

and also the conditions that make the skandhas born in sensual realms, “Kāma bhava” after 7 rebirths in the sensual realms. This means “he,” having attained sotapatti, will not be born in hell for ever and also will not be born in a sensual realm more than seven times at the maximum. It has already been mentioned earlier the gargantuanity of the decrease in suffering relative to the balance of suffering that remains. The cessation of the amount of suffering experienced by an attainer of sōtapatti is said to be “reaching Nirvana for the first time.”

When the one who has attained sōtapatti, attains by further striving, to “sakadāgāmihood,” out of seven skandhas to be born in sensual realms, the conditions for six skandhas cease, therefore he will have at maximum only one birth in a sensual realm. This cessation of the conditions for skandhas to be born for six times is said to be “reaching Nirvana for the second time.”

When the one who has attained sakadāgāmihood, by striving further, attains “Anāgāmihood,” the conditions which would have made his skandhas born only once in a sensual realm also ceases. Thereafter, he wouldn't be born in the sensual realm. This of the Anagamin is the “reaching Nirvana for the third time.”

When the Anāgāmin, by striving further, attains the state of Arhatship, conditions that make the skandhas born in realms of form or formless realms cease. Such a one would not be born anywhere. This Arhatship is “attaining or reaching Nirvana for the fourth time.”

After having reached Nirvāna for the fourth time, the Arhat mendicant has only skandhas in the present generated by a past cause. With parinibbāna (death) present skandhas dissociate. This is “reaching Nirvana for the fifth time.”

## The Two Aspects (forms) Of Nirvana.

The Nirvana experienced by the Sotāpattihood to Arahatsip and final dissolution of the skandhas is, in its dual nature of cessation and happiness, the same. Though in the ultimate sense the Nirvana is the same, yet as far as attainers of sotāpatti, sakādāgami, Anāgami and Arhat are concerned, they still have skandhas and in this aspect they are termed as being in or having attained "Soupādisesa Nirvāna." As Nirvāna after death of an Arhat has no Skandhas, it is termed "Anupādisesa Nirvāna." And so have stated the commentators.

**"Dve imā chakkhumā pakāsītā  
 nibbāna dhātu anissitēna tadina  
 ekāhi dhātu ida dittadhammikā  
 saupādisesā bhava netti samkhayā  
 anupādisesā pana samparaika  
 yamhi nirujjanti bhavāni sabbaso"**

"The Buddha, The five - eyed one, who has forsaken craving with respect to the skandhas, has proclaimed two forms of Nirvanic bliss. There is "soupādisesa Nirvāna" which is experienced in the present life after the cessation of craving which takes the "being" from one life to another. "Anupādisesa Nirvana" which is devoid of whatsoever skandhas and ushers in upon the final dissolution of the skandhas. Although there are disagreements on the Nirvana's soupādisesa or Anupādisesa nature, as the treatise is going to be extended, such facts will not be herein mentioned.

## Nirvana And Being.

As Arhants do not reborn, by arriving at Nirvana the so called "being" is extinguished and dissolved. However much

valued is Nirvāna, since there's no "person" who attains to it, it is considered, much to the chagrin of the actual truth, something empty, to be feared at and useless. It is true that there's no "personality" that partakes of Nirvana. Nirvāna is not alone in lacking a "personality" or "being." Even outside Nirvāna there's no being in the ultimate sense, only skandhas or aggregates endure. The five skandhas are existent in the ultimate sense. The rūpa or corporeality is not the being. Neither feeling nor sensation is the being. Nor mental formations or consciousness. There's no separate being outside the aggregate of the five skandhas. Therefore, except the literary convention there's no "a being" wheresoever.

But for the position of the world relative to the sun, there's nothing that we can call "a day." Sun is not the day. Sun's ray isn't either. Nor is darkness the "day." Except for these there's nothing we can call "a day." "A day" is just a mode of convention adopted by man. "A being" too is something of a similar nature. By considering "being," according to convention of the world one can say that this "five skandhas" is the inheritor of the Nirvāna sukha, one who enjoys the fruit of Nirvāna as much as Skandha dukkha, by familiar convention, is attributed to the bearer of the Skandhas. Therefore one should not be afraid of the fact that there's no being in Nirvāna.

## **The Four Qualities Of Nirvāna**

As is mentioned in the "Patisambhida Magga Pali," Nirvāna should be known by its four qualities, to wit "Nissaranatthaya," "Vivekatthaya," "Asankatathaya" and "Amatatthaya."

## Nissaranatthaya

By “Nissaranatthaya” is meant the liberation from defilements. Wherever the person who has not acquired liberation from defilements (Nirvāna) stay, to whatever position he has reached, that person is not freed from the oppression of defilements such as sensual attachment ....etc. Neither is he freed from the suffering consequent on the dabbling with the aggregates. Yet, nor is he freed from birth, ageing, death, sorrow, grief and lamentation. Nor is he also freed from suffering incumbent on being born in hell. As Nirvāna is a state of bliss absolutely freed from such suffering producing defilements. Those who have achieved Nirvāna, are beyond the domain of those defilements and respective sufferings. The fact that Nirvāna is untouched by defilements and suffering resulting from such defilements is its quality of “Nissaranatthaya.”

## Vivékathaya

By “Vivekatthaya” is meant Nirvāna's emptiness of defilement, and attendant suffering. Whatever life or in which-ever position the person yet to attain Nirvāna may find, he lives with the weight of defilements and incumbent suffering. He has no relief from defilements. No retirement from the gnawing of defilements. Neither does he enjoy the liberation from the suffering mass of the skandhas. As Nirvāna is the complete cessation of the dust of defilements and suffering, it is hundred percent bereft of whatsoever defilement or suffering as much as heat being absent in absolute coldness and darkness find no footing amidst light. Therefore, for one who has reached Nirvāna there's no cause to fear the defilements that, in turn, trigger suffering. So also, there are no causes to fear that the ceased dukkha might re - arise or that the ceased defilements

might re - arise. This complete absence of defilements and dukkha in Nirvana is its quality of "Vivékathaya."

### **Asankhatatthaya.**

Lack of the need of aid for its (Nirvāna's) sustenance, lack of the need for securing it day and night and also the lack of the need for regeneration comprise the quality of "Asankatathaya." Skandhas, generated from causes such as kamma, is of the nature of constantly wearing away, decaying, and complete dissolution, Therefore, for the one who lives with the skandhas loving them, lot of work needs be done; in order that the worn out parts of the body be regenerated, the body be not weak and that it be not left to perish, one has to take a lot of food. This agglomerate of skandhas needs clothing and for safety, to be kept inside houses. Thus, with a view to supplying these necessities and to maintain the five skandhas the "being" has to work incessantly. If the inhabitants of this world engage in some activities day and night, those activities are engaged in for the sake of the five skandhas. However much the five aggregates are protected with food and medicine, eventually they die and dissolve. Consequently, the so - called "being," in order to beget a new set of skandhas after death, should partake of acts of charity and refrain from sinful actions. Once, after begetting a new set of skandhas in a subsequent life, one is condemned to the same drudgery as was the case in previous life to secure the unbroken continuity of skandhas. So long one loves his skandhas, thus long would there be not any cessation from suffering and suffering would continue *ad infinitum* concomitant with existence of the desire.

Nirvana is not something that has arisen by means of a cause such as Kāṃma. Its (Nirvāna's) existence is unborn. Since Nirvana is uncaused in its existence unborn, it does not

wear away. Neither is there decaying nor shattering. Wearing away and shattering are characteristics of things or elements arisen from causes. Nirvana is of a nature as of light as opposed to darkness, coldness as opposed to hotness, happiness as opposed to anguish and an unborn, undecaying state as opposed to born, decaying and shattering states. Being not born and decaying, it remains for ever the same. Thus, the one who has reached Nirvāna does not have to trouble himself by way of repairing and replenishing the worn out parts. Nor is there anything to do in connection with securing and sustaining Nirvāna. Nor yet is there anything to do in the form of ushering in a new Nirvāna in place of the old Nirvāna. This fact of not having to do anything to sustain and maintain Nirvāna is its quality of "Asankatathaya."

### **Amatathaya**

Persistence for ever without wearing away and eventually dying leaving no trace is the quality of "Amatathaya." The skandhas arisen from causes such as karma which is considered by an ordinary person as a "soul," does not persist even the time interval occupied by the batting of an eye - lid. A little time afterwards, its (skandha's) whole generation comes to an end. Taking cause generated skandhas for a soul and extremely attached to it, the being has no whatsoever opportunity to live without the fear of death. He (the being) always lives with the fear of death hovering about him. For the one who has reached Nirvāna which persists eternally and is without any cause has no fear of death. Unshattered, remaining for ever and perfect stability comprise Nirvāna's quality of "Amatathaya."

If in something there are the quality of Nissaranatthaya which signifies transcending of suffering, Vivékatthaya which



signifies the unadmixture with suffering, Asankatattaya which signifies the lack of need for renewal and replenishment and Amatattaya which signifies eternal persistence and stability that, that is the "Dukkha Nirodha Arya Satya," the truth of the cessation of suffering. The one and only one thing that possesses these four qualities is "Nirvāna." Therefore the declarer of truth, the blessed one asserted that the truth of the cessation of suffering is Nirvana.

## Chapter Four.

### The Way Leading To The Cessation Of Suffering. (The Noble Eightfold Path)

So long as craving (*Dukkha samudayārya satya*) remains unextinguished pervading the human mind, as long it (craving) would make anew the set of five skandhas with the cessation (in death) of the previous skandhas in a long succession of repeated rebirths. The generation of suffering (*Dukkha*) is thus maintained. So, the five skandhas, the provenance of birth, ageing, disease, death, sorrow and lamentation.....etc, are sustained.

Just as in the world there are light against darkness, coldness against heat, antidotes against diseases and righteousness against unrighteousness, there is also something against the recurrent *Dukkha*. That something we call, as has been already mentioned, *Nirvāna* or ***Dukkha Nirodhārya satya***. This <sup>88</sup> elemental *Nirvāna* is clouded and pestered by the five gory aggregates and its (*Nirvāna*'s) flavour (of emancipation) remain untappable by the ordinary human. If craving, which assembles and brings forth the <sup>89</sup> suffering mass is eradicated,

88. Primordial, without any origin or birth.

89. The five aggregates or skandhas.

the train of suffering which blooms with it also ceases. With the cessation of the five skandhas, the Nirvana which had been clouded by the skandhas emanates and shines in splendour. When Nirvana thus shows forth, it is conventionally said that the person has reached or attained to Nirvāna.

For a person to be able to reach or attain to Nirvāna, the five aggregates which purblind it should disappear. In order to discard the five aggregates, the craving, which produces the five aggregates repeatedly should be destroyed. It is solely and only by destroying craving can the five aggregates be gotten rid of. Therefore, if there is a way of destroying craving, of eradicating it, that is also the way to reach the supreme Nirvana devoid of all suffering. That method or way to reach or attain to Nirvāna is called "Dukkha Nirodhagamini Pratipadā satya" or "Marga satya" The Noble Eightfold Path.

Now it is pertinent to ask what is capable of deracinating craving (Tanhā). Craving is not something that appears without a cause; not something like Nirvāna that is without any origin. It (craving) too has a cause. As much as dukkha is eliminated by destruction of its cause, so, craving can also be eliminated only by getting hold of its cause and thereof deracinating it (the cause). Therefore one, who is desirous of exterminating craving, must find the cause of craving and give it a *coup de grace*. One should concentrate his activity on destroying the craving's cause. Then, let us start our activity by finding the true cause of craving.

To be plain, the real cause of craving is ignorance. Without the prompting or activation by a creator God or Brahma or whosoever, arisen only from certain specific causes and having arisen, contrary to the will of the people, dies with a fraction of time duration taken to bat an eye - lid, dies like a

sudden quirk of lightning, devoid of whatsoever personality, the five skandhas owing to not being discerned as a conglomeration of mind and form, due to the inability to separate touch, feeling .....etc, the wrong notion of considering name and form as an "I" and as "gods" and "humans" and "animals" predominates. This wrong notion due to ignorance is Known as "Satkaya dushti."

The mind - body aggregates are, like a flash of electric current, like a line drawn on water, of the nature of immediate disintegration. By not perceiving this quality of impermanence, the ordinary person considers mind - body aggregates as endurable entities despite the fact that they are within the bounds of birth, ageing, death.... etc, making the person aggrieved by their constant disintegration and gushing upon the person various sorrows and griefs that make the person helpless. By not knowing these inherent dukkha of the mind - body aggregates, the wrong notion that mind - body is pleasurable and begotten of happiness prevails.

Instead of considering mind - body aggregates as a group of elements constantly changing and divested of personality, it is wrongly taken to be "I" "Mine," "animal" and "people," moreover, it (mind - body) is also wrongly taken to be perdurable and so also wrongly as a pleasurable, happiness - inducing object; because of these three greatly mistaken notions, there arises attachment and craving towards this "I" or "personality." Furthermore, craving also arises towards one's wife, children, relations and friends. Yet also craving arises with respect to one's house, field, grassland, money and other things that he desires. Thus craving has its provenance in the aforesaid three wrong notions harboured with respect to the five - skandhas (mind - body aggregates.)

So long as the aforementioned three wrong views exist, so long in him craving would repeatedly arise. What should be done in order to eradicate craving is to root out the three wrong views. If some person totally has not the feeling of "I" towards his five aggregates, he does not conceive of the five aggregates any more than he conceives of a mound of soil, heap of dust or a log of wood. For one who views aggregates not as "I" or "personality" but as a heap of dust, log of wood and a mound of soil, how can there be any attachment towards the skandhas? For one who disowns mental formations (sanskaras) as not "I" or "mine" since there is no "me," can he ever have feelings of the sort "This is mine," "This I want?" As facts are such, with the cessation of wrong notions regarding mind - body aggregates, craving too ceases.

The Three wrong notions can be deracinated by begetting the knowledge that sees the composites of the five - aggregates such as mind, mental formations, form, elements.....etc and their three characteristics, namely impermanence, dukkha and soulessness. Only by such knowledge can the three wrong notions be eliminated, nothing else can eliminate them. No other method, other than rooting out the three wrong views, can exterminate craving. Although some think that craving could be alleviated by acts of charity, yet this way of thinking is owing to not knowing the actual facts. Acts of charity lead to a diminution of greed - albeit greed for the object given away in charity. Though the greed for the object given away in charity gets quenched, the root of craving remains intact and craving arises thereafter with regard to various other objects.

Although greed extinguishes temporarily from deeds of liberality, when results of such acts of liberality fructify, just

like seven to eight branches spring up from a cut branch of a tree, craving springs up like a vast tide due to the objects of such fructifications. In fact, those who perform acts of charity for worldly pleasures have their craving increased thereby. Those who perform acts of charity for the sake of attaining Nirvana have their craving diminished thereby. However much one may perform acts of charity, greed is not thereby exterminated but remains at abeyance. Charity must be indulged in since a being needs worldly pleasures and to develop wisdom while journeying in samsāra. One should not misunderstand liberality to be of a useless activity. But if one wishes to uproot craving and attain Nirvāna only by charity that, that is a mistaken belief.

Knowledge is twofold. To wit, inferential knowledge and empirical knowledge. By seeing a shake on the water and knowing there's a fish is inferential knowledge. By taking the fish out of water and seeing it, leaving no doubt in the mind is empirical knowledge. Out of the two types of knowledge, the inferential knowledge is the weaker. Empirical Knowledge is more powerful. It is also known as "knowledge by direct perception (prativédha ñāna)" By knowing mind-matter components of aggregates and the <sup>90</sup> three characteristics with which they are associated, it is said that craving would cease, but by merely knowing them inferentially would not make the craving cease. Craving will cease only when as empirical knowledge is gained regarding mind - matter components and the three characteristics.

About mind - matter components and the associated three characteristics, we can know by listening to discourses, read-

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90. Impermanence, suffering or unsatisfactoriness (dukkha) and soullessness (Anata)

ing dhamma books and consulting revered teachers. All these is inferential knowledge. Inferential knowledge is capable, if at all, at thinning out our three wrong notions with regard to mind - body aggregates, not at eradicating them.

Having known (by any of the aforesaid ways) the three wrong notions and their implications, one must endeavor to proceed to a quiet place and ponder consciously the three characteristics and associated facts - a process known as vidarshana (vipassanā) meditation (in order to know vidarshana meditation exactly one must refer the second book in the series, "Sambuddha Jayanthi Dharma Pustaka".) When this (Vidarshana meditation) is done, his knowledge of the aforesaid aspects of the dhamma increase from day to day, month to month, year to year and from life to life. As knowledge develops, characteristics such as impermanence begins to be seen clearer and clearer. With the progress of time, the five aggregates and their three characteristics begin to be very lucid and perspicuous that they are seen as if though to the naked eye. This perspicuous perception is known as empirical knowledge. This empirical knowledge is capable of smashing the three wrong notions with respect to the five aggregates.

For the yogi who dwells continuing vidarshana meditation if at some point of time dawns the knowledge that subsides the three wrong notions and sees the three characteristics of the five aggregates, at that point of time the yogi sees the supreme beatitude and blessedness of Nirvana face to face and the yogi begets supra - mundane knowledge that cuts off the most potent part of craving. When this happens it is said that the person has attained to sotapatti or, in English, that the person has gained "stream entry." This supra - mundane wisdom (knowledge) is called "sōtapatti mārga ñāna."

Despite the attainment of stream entry, still subtle forms of craving linger. In order to eradicate these subtle forms of craving one must further endeavor in Vidarshana meditation. When the attempt is thus carried forward, one sees the characteristics viz., impermanence....etc, very much more enhanced and clear cut than earlier, knowledge becomes sharper, blessedness of Nirvāna is seen face to face once again and a supra - mundane knowledge appears that roots out other more potent parts of craving. This supra - mundane knowledge is known as “sakādagami marganana” or in English phraseology, becoming a “once returner.” Nor is sakadagami-hood the total eradication of craving. Therefore one who has become a “once returner” should further strive on the path of vidarshana pondering on the three characteristics. While thus advancing on the path of Vidarshanā, the three characteristics become even sharper, unfolding still more snippets of knowledge (wisdom) through which Nirvāna is once again experienced with simultaneous onset of a supra - mundane knowledge that delivers the *coup de grace* to sensual craving. This supra - mundane knowledge is called “Anagāmi marga ñāna” or in English, <sup>91</sup> a “Never returner.”

Even after having become an Anagāmin, craving for form and formlessness persists. To alleviate these two types of craving one has to throw himself to the utter depths of Vidarshana. When thus persevered, the knowledge reaches its most advanced form deracinating the aforesaid craving in a way never to arise again and plunging oneself in the nectar of Nirvana in its highest supra - mundane form. This highest form

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91. A person who wouldn't be born in human realm or any other realm but in a specially set out realm for the Anagamins termed “Sudhāvāsa brahma realm.”



of knowledge (wisdom) is titled “Arhat marga nāna” or Arhatship. One who has attained to such a height of spiritual wisdom is called an “Arhant.”

If there is a supra - mundane wisdom that culminates in experientially knowing the three characteristics and liberation from craving followed by four times of empirically kenning Nirvāna, that is also, the overthrower of craving. As the oasis of Nirvana can be reached only by severing craving, which generates suffering, this supra - mundane knowledge is also the thing that delivers the one unto Nirvāna, the summum bonum. Thus, the way to the cessation of suffering, “marga satya” the Noble Eightfold path.

### **The Noble Eightfold path.**

The above - mentioned supra - mundane knowledge, by itself, is incapable of delivering the one unto Nirvana. There are seven other principles that are co - ordinative and concurrent with it. These seven principles are also encapsulated in “Margasatya” (and, hence the noble eight - fold path). Therefore, the exalted one, after perfecting the doctrine, discoursed:

**“Katamanca bhikkhave, dukkha nirodhagāmini patipadā ariya sachcham? Ayameva ariyo atthangiko maggo. Sēyathidam? Sammāditthi, Sammāsamkappo, Sammāvācā, Sammākammanto, Sammāājī vo, Sammāvayamo, Sammāsati, Sammāsamādhi. Idam vuccati bhikkhavé, dukkha nirodhagāmini patipadā ariya saccam.”**

“Bhikkus! What is the Noble Eightfold path? It is the way with eight sections. What is it? Right understanding, Right

thoughts, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness and Right concentration. Bhikkhus! This is known as the Noble Eightfold path (Dukkha Nirōdha gāminī pratipādārya satya)."

- 1) Samma ditthi (Right understanding)
- 2) Samma samkappa (Right thoughts)
- 3) Samma vāca (Right speech)
- 4) Samma kammanta (Right action)
- 5) Samma ajiva (Right Livelihood)
- 6) Samma vāyāma (Right effort)
- 7) Samma sati (Right mindfulness)
- 8) Samma samadhi (Right concentration)

These are the components of the Noble Eightfold path. Right Understanding (samma ditthi) is the aforementioned supramundane knowledge that roots out craving. The rest are elements that help to achieve the Right Understanding.

These eight mental elements are also born in the minds of mundane people. But all the eight factors do not arise concurrently in one mind. For each mind, at times, only a few of them arise. As few of them, in the mundane mind arise in bundles. They are apt to be addressed by the terms "Marganga" or "Marga," however, as they lack the ability to eradicate craving, they are not termed "Dukkha nirōdha gāminī pratipadārya <sup>92</sup> saccha." Margasatya can be applied when all the eight factors concomittantly arise embodying the power to deracinate craving.

When all the eight factors with anti - defilement action dawn in the supramundane mind for the first time, it is known

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92. "saccha" is the pāli term for "truth" or "sataya" in sinhala.

as Sotapatti marga, when dawn for the second time, Sakrudāgāmi marga, for the third time Anāgāmi marga and for the fourth, Arhat marga. It is by only those who developed these eight factors in their worldly minds that can cause the same eight factors to be borne concomitantly in their supramundane minds.

Therefore it is imperative that those who are desirous of evoking the supramundane pathway (mārga) and attaining Nirvāna should, a few at a time, develop the eight factors such as Right Understanding....etc. For one who develops and practises the eight factors there comes a time, however long it may be, when finally he sees the supramundane path. Those who don't develop likewise see no supramundane path for ever. Even to be able to develop the eight factors separately, first of all, one must know what those eight factors are. Therefore, hereon, those eight factors would be explained in detail.

## **Right Understanding (Right view)**

“Understanding” or “view” is two fold, namely wrong view and right view. The type of view that takes a piece of glass as a precious gem or vice versa is wrong. In those who don't know anything, certain wrong views occur regarding lot of things at various times. Amidst such wrong views, there is a portion that if tenaciously clung to would make one end up in hell and barricading the path to supreme beatitude. That portion of wrong views is termed in religious literature as Miccha Ditthi (wrong view or heretical doctrinaire.)

“That there is no merit or demerit. They are created by those who want to beguile the world and get some profit out of them. By liberality one does not gain but lose. By abstaining from taking life one only gets into trouble here and now but nothing else. There is nothing that meets the

description of hell, heaven or brahma realms. That there's no rebirth after death. That there's no special group of people known as Buddhas and Arhats." These are a few of the Miccha Ditthis or wrong views.

Knowledge of things as they are is considered as right understanding or right view. Amidst right views there's a portion of them that nullifies one's wrong views, makes one born in a happy realm, helps one to attain the supreme liberation of Nirvāṇa. This portion is called right view. "That there are merits and demerits and there are results or consequences of merits and demerits, that there is rebirth" are a few that belongs to right view.

The true meaning of "sammaditthi" or "samyagdrushti" is Right understanding or right view (wisdom). For, although Right Understanding is one, according to the thing which is known in its correct perspective, it's diverse. Therefore in lot of discourses, right understanding is elaborated in many ways. To mention it in the shortest way :-

**Dashavastuka samyagdrushti (Ten - fold Right Understanding)**  
**Chatussatya samyagdrushti (Fourfold Right Understanding)**

thus Right view is twofold. Here "Dashavastuka samyagdrushti" is the Right understanding with respect to ten objects.

## Tenfold Right Understanding

<sup>93</sup>. "Sammā ditthiko hoti aviparīta dassano, atthi dinnam atthiyttham, atthi hutam, atthi sukatadukkātānam kammānam

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93. Those who find this passage in Pali unpronounceable can neglect this and read on but keep in mind that meanings of underlined terms are expanded upon.

phalam vipāko, atthi ayam loko, atthi paroloko, atthi mātā, atthi pitā, atthi sattā opapātikā, atthi loke samana brahmanā samaggaṭā sammā patipannā ye imanca lokam paranca lokam sayam abhinnā saccikatvā pavedenti” ū.

This paragraph in Pali explains at length the components of the “Tenfold Right Understanding.” It says that consequences or results are there by way of moral retribution for deeds such as liberality, offerings in general and offerings for religious mendicants and sages of great wisdom, and of deeds that are morally classified as wholesome and unwholesome. Furthermore, that those who are in other worlds can be reborn in this world and vice versa; that there are results of wholesome and unwholesome acts performed towards parents in particular to each one and in general, that the beings are reborn or rather rebecome after death, that there are sramanas and <sup>94</sup>brahmanas who, after having reached immaculate wisdom, preach about this world and the other world.

## 1. Atthi Dinnam

This term emphasizes that it is a type of right understanding to believe after having realised it by oneself or from somebody else that there accrues great merit to one who offers food, clothes and other riches to sramanas, brahmanas, mendicants and other poverty stricken people. To believe that one only loses by acts of charity is a heretical view (**Miccha ditthi**)

## 2. Atthi Yittham

“yittha” is a name for <sup>95</sup> massive offerings or acts of charity. The fact that those who perform massive offerings with

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94. Arhants or anybody attained to any of the other three states.

95. Here what is emphasised is the massiveness of the offering, not by ones or tens but by hundreds, thousands and so on.

flowers, lamps, food and clothing.....etc., and acts of charity towards hundreds and thousands of recipients are endowed with great merit which enable them to be reborn in the human realm or born in the heavenly realms with lot of favourable and wholesome conditions is called “Atthi yittam,” and this is right view. It is heretical or wrong to believe that by offering lot of flowers only adds to the refuse of the temple, that by lightening lot of lamps only burn lot of oil making the temple environment noxious, that by offering lot of food to a dagoba (pagoda) only wastes the foods, that liberality only destroys valuable property and has no consequence to the giver. These are categorised **Miccha ditthi**.

### 3. **Atthi hutam**

By considering the merit that accrues, sending as gifts, various objects to the greatful and the wise and believing this to be of great merit after death is known as “Atthi hutam.” And this also a form of Right Understanding. The non - belief in this view is a **Miccha ditti**.

### 4. **Atthi sukatadukka tānam kammānām phalam Vipāko**

To those who perform or cause to perform acts such as construction of dagobas, <sup>96</sup> dhamma libraries and halls, wells, ponds and state rest homes (ambalamas); for the benefit of the others planting or causing to plant flowering shrubs and plants, helping the poor, needy, poverty stricken people, preaching the dhamma and reading it, listening to dhamma, causing the dhamma to be listened, observance of disciplinary rules, or-

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96. Dhamma = Buddha's doctriue.

daining as a monk and meditation will confer definitely some merits in the next life. So also there are effects for the acts of sinful thoughts such as killings. Thus the belief in the existence of resultants or consequences of our actions constitutes “Atthi sukatadukkatanam kammānam phalam Vipako.” This is another form of Right understanding. The opposite of this view that there are no consequences in our actions in the future lives is wrong and is a **Miccha ditthi**.

## 5. Atthi ayam loko

Notwithstanding our world, there are innumerable number of worlds whose pleasures and pains are just as in ours and also whose pleasures and pains are very different to those of ours. Beings in a particular type of world do not for ever live in that particular world. They (beings) after dying in their particular world are reborn in distant and different worlds. Therefore those who live in distant and different worlds to our own, die and are reborn in our world. Thus it is said that our world is present for those that are in distant worlds to be reborn. To accept and believe this as such is a form of Right Understanding called “Atthi ayam loko.” Similarly it is a **Miccha ditthi** to believe that we are birth - wise confined to this world and those in distant worlds are confined to theirs.

## 6. Atthi Paroloko

Beings who live in this world, depending on their karma come to be born in different and distant worlds such as the hell. Therefore “Atthi Paroloko” connotes the right understanding of the existence of a world or worlds as “hereafters.” The opinion of some that beings in this world are always reborn after death in this world, there's no other world-or hereafter, that, hell, heaven and brahma realm are in this world; these views are classified **Miccha ditthi**.

## 7. Atthi mātā

Depending on how one attends on one's mother, one in the future will yield vipāka (resultants or consequences) that may be good or bad. And this is certainly so. This is a form of Right view known as "Atthi mātā." It is a **miccha ditthi** to consider that there are no consequences or effects whatsoever of what one do unto one's mother.

## 8. Atthi pitā

Just as in the case of the mother, there are vipāka, which may be good or bad, that one may yield in the indefinite future, of how one attends on one's father. This is the form of Right view known as "Atthi pitā." Supposing that there are no such vipāka or consequences is a **miccha ditthi**.

## 9. Atthi sattā opapāthikā

The fact that dying beings, instead of ending there, continuing, till craving is eradicated, by means of rebirths fashioned by kamma, one's own actions, is a<sup>97</sup> belief which is a form of right understanding dictated by –"Atthi sattā opapāthikā." To state in a different way there is a segment of beings that are born without the prior condition of a mother or a father in their entirety of bodily structure by the sheer force of kamma. This group of beings is called "opapāthika," those that are born by "spontaneous generation." In the hell, heavenly realms and brahma realms, this type of beings prevail. The knowledge that there exists "spontaneously generated beings" is a right view.

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97. Here belief is used in the place of "rational understanding." If not there is a repetition of the term "understanding" as the term is used in "Right understanding."



Some say that there are no special beings such as devas and brahmas, that these beings exist only in the mental make up of certain people, that they are present only in the psychology of the foolish. Some others contend that devas and brahmas are merely people who had lived in the name of those said beings and that there are no special categories of beings spontaneously generated. This sort of belief is **Miccha ditthi**.

**10. Atthi loké samana brahmanā samagghā  
sammā patipannā ye imanca lokam paranca  
lōkam sayam abhiñña saccikatvā pavédenti.**

Seldom are born in this world people whose wisdom is exceptional (very much beyond average), who are endowed with unflinching courage and patience and congenitally are of tremendous wit and candour. Amongst those people, some go forth from home to homelessness becoming ascetics and mendicants; they by meditational concentration with great effort and forbearance acquire paranormal knowledge or abinnā which enables them to see things or forms without the help of eyes (clairvoyance,) to hear sounds without the help of the ears (clairaudience), to possess retro - cognitive knowledge as to their activities in previous lives and to know the birth places of those who are dying.....etc.

Those who have acquired such supernormal powers see beings such as devas and brahma gods who are of subtle form and who cannot be seen by ordinary human eye. They also clearly see distant worlds such as hell, heavenly realms and brahma realms as is seen by a person gone to those worlds and sight seeing. They also see with clarity the actions (karma) of those devas and brahmas which made them born unto those worlds with manifestly variegated pleasures. So also, those

great people predicate the presence of holy ghosts, hellish denizens, devas and brahmas, their appearances and pleasures and pains they undergo according to the way he perceives them. They assert the existence of wholesome and unwholesome actions, their efficacy and results they bear upon by way of retribution.

Great men who very seldom appear in the world beget “Abhiñña” while simultaneously attaining to Arhatship and omniscience. Those men are called “Buddhas.” Buddhas, of course, not only possess abhiñña but see through the psychic eye worlds that are immensities away as if seeing something in front of them and discourse on the profoundest Nirvāna and the way leading thereto. To understand and comprehend that such people as the Buddhas possess omniscience, that various worlds exist with sundry types of beings, that there are spontaneously generated beings such as devas and brahmas who cannot be seen by the ordinary human eye, that there are the four paths cum fruits and the supramundane dhamma and that there is a policy by sticking to which Nirvana can be attained, are all come under the right understanding, explained by “Atthi lōke samana brahmanā.... pavedanti.”

The forms of Right Understanding, in total nine, as “Atthi dinnam,” “Atthi yitam.... etc.” explored earlier are contained in the tenth form of Right Understanding, “Atthi loke samanā...” just concluded in the previous paragraph. Therefore this tenth form of right understanding is prominent. That there are merits, demerits and their consequences, that rebecoming is certain, that there are diverse realms as hell, heavens and brahma realms.....etc are also found in some other non - Buddhist religions and philosophies, where the tenth form of right understanding too is present. While this being so, yet, the ten

forms of right understanding present in non - buddhist religions is not as pure and refined and perfect as it is in Buddhism for, forms of right understanding in non - buddhist religions aim at birth in a heaven and not at Nirvāna which is very different from hells, heavens and brahma realms. There is no Nirvāna in non - buddhist cults. As Buddhism exposes deva heavens, brahma realms and Nirvāna, the ten forms of right understanding ingrained in Buddhism makes possible not only the attainment of a heavenly realm but also the supreme liberation from suffering.

As a matter of fact, the first component of the noble eightfold path, Right Understanding, is not contained in the just aforementioned “tenfold Right Understanding.” Rather, it is called “fourfold Right Understanding.” This is a higher and nobler understanding than the tenfold one. Tenfold Right Understanding was first mentioned owing to the fact that without first getting acquainted with it fourfold Right Understanding cannot be grasped and without it arriving at Nirvana would also be impossible. Those who are desirous of dissociating the bonds of suffering and arriving at the pasture land of Nirvāna, first of all, should place themselves on the tenfold Right Understanding. Those who make their entrance into Buddhism are made to chant the <sup>98</sup>three refuges for the purport of placing them on the tenfold Right Understanding. If someone, after having paid due obeisance to the three refuges, Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha (community of Buddhas disciples), places himself and embraces the tenfold Right Understanding, that would be his first step in the noble eightfold path.

There is no one who attained Nirvāna without at the outset placing himself on the tenfold Right Understanding. If in the past anyone attained Nirvana, they all did so by first

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98. I pay homage to the Buddha, .....dhamma, .....sangha.

placing themselves on and observing the tenfold Right Understanding. If in the future anyone succeeds in attaining Nirvana, he will also have to do that by first placing himself on the same Right Understanding. Therefore everyone who is desirous of transcending samsaric suffering should polish his right understanding. They should not be overtaken by those who expound pernicious lies such as "There's no hell or heaven....etc." Should the doubt arise with respect to any doctrinal standpoint, one should approach a learned person in dhamma who is placed on right understanding and get his point cleared. At this time of day, not only among the laity but also among priests there are lot of error - bound and heretical. Be careful of such type of people. To get rid of the fear of hellish existence and to acquire freedom from suffering there's nothing as helpful as the right understanding. Thus, the exalted one has said.

**"Nāham bhikkhave ! annam eka dhammampi samanupassāmi, yena anuppannā vā kusalā dhammā uppajjanti, uppanna vā kusalā dhammā bhīyyobhavāya veppulāya samvattanti. Yathaidam bhikkhave samma ditthi. sammāditthikassa bhikkhave! anuppannā ceva kusala dhammā uppajjanti; uppanna ca kusalā dhamma bhīyyobhavāya veppulaya samvattanti."**

"Bhikkus! I don't know any other principle, other than Right Understanding, which conduces to birth of unborn merit and the development of born merit. Bhikkus! The person with Right Understanding is begotten of unborn merits and development of already born merits."

### **Fourfold Right Understanding.**

**"Tattha katamā sammāditthi? Dukkhe ñanam, dukkha samudaye ñanam, dukkha nirodhe ñanam, dukka nirodha gāminiā patipadāya ñanam, ayam vuccati sammā ditthi"**

This is the way in which Right understanding has been dealt with in hundreds of <sup>99</sup> suttas explaining the four noble truths and in <sup>100</sup> Abidhamma where “Marga satya” is expounded. It is affirmed here that knowledge that apprehends suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering and the way leading to the cessation of suffering constitutes the fourfold right understanding. As this Right Understanding is concerned with the four noble truths, it is thereby called “catussatya sammaditthi” or “Fourfold Right Understanding.”

The tenfold Right Understanding which was discussed previously is included not only in Buddhism but in some other religions as well. This Fourfold Right Understanding is found only in Buddhism. It cannot be found in whatsoever any other religion. It can be come across only at times wherein a Buddha has been born unto the world and Buddhism flourishes. Therefore it is a very rare form of right understanding. It is the most prominent of all the various types of right understandings. In order to manifest this, the most prominent form of right understanding, the FNTs must be learnt acutely. For some of you who read this, thinking may occur that the tenfold Right Understanding is not essential, to learn the FNTs and evoke the fourfold Right Understanding is enough: such is wrong thinking.

Fourfold Right Understanding is a very broad form of Right Understanding that even the tenfold Right Understanding is included in it. If a person is well grounded in the fourfold Right Understanding, he would certainly have comprehended the existence of wholesome and unwholesome actions, their

99. Scriptures.

100. One of the three baskets (Tripitaka) of the exposition of Buddhist doctrine.

consequences and the presence of a hereafter..... etc. If he does not accept these principles then he would not be firmly grounded on the fourfold Right Understanding. However it has to be asserted that by being sternly based on the tenfold Right Understanding does not mean that the one is properly placed on the fourfold Right Understanding.

Although fourfold <sup>101</sup>RU is just a single phrase, actually it should be mentioned in four component parts. To wit, Right Understanding on the fact of suffering, RU of the cause of suffering, RU of the cessation of suffering and RU of the way to the cessation of suffering.

Thereon, when the RU on the fact of suffering realises, the **satkāya ditthi**, the self - assertion, belief in an abiding personality or ego disappears and the panchaskandha is viewed as a process of varied suffering, a process that drags **ad nauseum**. When the RU of the cause of suffering (craving) is realised, the fact of rebirth so long as craving exists becomes manifest obliterating the **Uccheda ditthi** which negates rebirth after death. When the RU of the cessation of suffering realises the fact that when causes disappear their effects too wear away is penetrated and **shasvata ditthi** which stipulate an eternal ego is irrevocably revoked. When the RU of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is realised, it is understood that Nirvana is reached through a well regulated policy and one's purification and rebirth happen impersonally i. e. not by oneself or sramana - brahmana or by the good grace of any other external agency. This obliterates the "non - actional view (**Acārīyaditthi**) and the "acausal view (**Ahétuka ditthi**)" which stipulates that beings become purify or demean by chance.

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101. Right Understanding

Moreover, by the RU of the fact of suffering, the result of the RU of the cause of suffering, eternal - pleasant - happy - egoistic nature held with respect to the five - skandhas is relinquished. There is a multiplicity of views added to the pool of views by religious personalities not knowing the quiddity of the truth of the cause of suffering.

(1) It is a false view that this world (universe) is created by some omnipotent god or brahma and is sustained as he wishes and finally destroys it. This is known as <sup>102</sup> **Ishvara** - creative theory.

(2) Another false view is the pantheistic theory where god is made an impersonal force that pervades and is immanent in the universe as a whole. There cannot be an act of creation but a creative force out of which arises manifold objects. At the destruction of the world, the manifold objects which it has manifested is said to dissolve and be one with it. This is known as pantheistic theory or “prakurti vāda.”

(3) Yet another false theory is the “Theory of time” which lays out that only and only due to time that world originates and destroys. The creator and the destroyer is time. No god or brahma is envisaged by this theory.

(4) Another imperfect theory states that, as needle - like outgrowths of trees needed no one to fashion them, as fruits like woodapple needed no one to ensphere the essence, as no one was needed to adorn the various birds with multifariously colored feathers, everything happens by the force of nature. It is by the force of nature that world arises and finally destroys. This is known as the “Theory of Nature.”

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102. Ishvara is the Indian counterpart of the omnipotent god.

By cognizing the cause of suffering intuitively such superstitious (beliefs) understandings can be thrown into the limbo of oblivion as a result of the Right understanding that dawns consequently. Some, as a result of wrong understanding, consider realms of form and formless realms as Nirvana and assiduously try to attain to them. The knowledge of the cessation of suffering dispels such wrong views. The knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering dispels the incorrect paths to enlightenment like sensual indulgence and self mortification.

Those who like to imbue themselves in the river of the aforementioned right understanding should consult expert teachers and practise and famirialize theselves with the truths as the fact of suffering..... etc. When one does so, the truth perceiving Right Understanding arises within him obviating the darkness of ignorance. Albeit, this knowledge is worldly. As one keeps on advancing in the path, the day would finally arrive when one sees with magnificent perspicacity the whole of the four aryan truths with the splendour of immaculate Right understanding that puts one in line with the supra - mundane Nirvana.

### **Right Thoughts (Sammā Sankappa)**

For a one, who is overwhelmed in darkness, can come into contact with the objects surrounding him only by touching the objects with his hands. An object would be known only if his hands make contact with it. Consequently, if his hand did not grasp an object, **protanto** he would not know the presence and the nature of the object. So also, if the mind grasps on to a mind - object, **protanto**, it or them can be known. What the mind would not grasp, there is no way of knowing them. Apart



from mind objects, mind spontaneously take hold of objects reaching it through the five senses and they are form - sound - smell - taste - tactile objects. To the rest of the objects, mind should be impelled and prodded with a certain amount of effort. The process of diverting the mind to immediately unknown objects is known as thinking. The mind is diverted to the aforesaid unknown territory by one of the *samkhāras* or mental formations known as “*Vitarka*.” “*Sankappa*” is an alternative to the same term. This is, in common parlance, referred to as “Thinking.”

Amidst thoughts one experiences, there are those which are detrimental to oneself and to others, and so are those that are for the benefit of oneself and others. Thoughts that are detrimental are known as *Miccha sankappa* while thoughts that are benign and beneficent are known as *samma sankappa*. It is this *samma sankappa* that we deal herein. There are many a benign thought. From which we tackle here only three. Therefore, in pointing out the three, it has been said that “*Gneiskramya*,” “*Avyapāda*,” and “*Avihimsā*” are the three *sankappas* which comprise *samma sankappa* of the noble eightfold path.

**“*Thattha kathamō sammasaṅkaphō? Nekkamma Sankaphō, avyapāda saṅkaphō, avihimsā saṅkaphō, ayan wuchchatī sammā saṅkaphō.*”**

## Thought Of Gneiskramya

By “*Gneiskramya*” is denoted renunciation, leaving, liberation, or escape. Beings cling to forms - sounds - smells - tastes and tactile objects. Herein “*Gneiskramya*” is used to connote renunciation from the prison of sense pleasures. If by

some sort of thinking or reflection on the part of the person weans himself away from sense gratification, loosens his bondage to such pleasures - that is called Gneiskramya sankappa. Thoughts smirched with craving leading to sensual pleasures are termed “Kāma sankappa.” Gneiskramya sankappa is diametrically opposed to kāma sankappa. Gneiskramya arises by shattering and totally defying the essence of kāma sankappa.

<sup>103</sup>Fasting on days when one quarter of the moon is visible, entering priesthood, observing the precept of self - denial, indulging in samata and Vidarshana meditation should be made to be born in the mundane mind. Observance of precepts on the full - moon day is, to a certain extent, renouncing the pleasures of the senses. Thus this too could be classified as Gneiskramya. So also, entering priesthood, practising the precept of self - denial and indulging in meditation sequestering one from many a sensual pleasure. It is befitting to reflect the disadvantages of sensual thoughts. In the one who does so, mundane - Gneiskramya sankappa emerges completely subjugating the sensual meanderings of the mind. By simultaneously engaging in Vidarshana meditation, it gets sharpened and whetted culminating in the knowledge of the way. Meanwhile the knowledge reaches supra - mundane heights, crushing and annihilating the sensual reflection, permeating with the knowledge leading to the way of the cessation of suffering.

### **Thoughts of Compassion (Avyāpāda)**

Desiring the happiness and well-being of humans and every other being - the thoughts of such desiring being permeated with compassion and loving kindness - is “Avyāpāda.”

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103. A traditional practice indulged in by Buddhists.

This is in diametrical opposition with desiring something bad or cruel to happen to someone or planning to do such, cursing, maligning and the like thoughts. Thoughts admixed with anger too, are in stark contrast with compassionate thoughts. Compassion should first be developed, before entering the path, to worldly objects - considering the disadvantages of cruelty and hatred and inculcating compassion toward all living entities. Once the loving - kindness thus established is advanced considerably, it can be carried to supra - mundane levels through the path consciousness and the malific thoughtlings can be totally rooted out.

### • **Thoughts of sympathy (Avihimsā)**

Thoughts associated with liberating the beings so drenched in suffering is termed “Avihimsā sankappa.” This is also in diametrical opposition with harmful hatred and cruelty. When sympathetic thoughts come into being, they so arise deracinating the essence of cruelty and unkindness. This concept of sammā sankappa should be established by helping those who suffer, constantly engaging in meditation of sympathy and by considering the disadvantages of unkindness and harassment - thus should it be raised to supra - mundane levels.

The three type of thoughts, of renunciation, compassion, and sympathy, in the worldly mind, appear separately, with three types of functions at widely differing opportunities. However in the supra - mundane path consciousness all the three forms of thought appear as “Sammā Sankappa” or Right thought. Wherefrom all the functions discharged by separate forms as Gneiskramya....etc are taken over by the one concept “Sammā sankappa.” Hence, what is one in the supra - mundane path consciousness is discoursed threefold.

## Right Speech (Sammā Vācā)

What we usually call Right speech is the true, wholesome speech. The Right speech pertaining to the eight fold way is not this. According to what is expounded in **Vibhaṅga Pāli**, Right speech is; refrain from lying, slandering, using raucous words, and idle talk.

**“Tattha kathamā sammā vacā? musavadā veramanī, pisunā vacā veramanī, parusā vacā veramanī, samphappalapā veramanī ayam vuccati sammā vacā.”** In those who observe the <sup>104</sup> precept of abstinence from lying and of those who merely determined not, for eg., to lie, who refrain from lying at the particular occasions and talk the truth, is there a certain moral force in their minds that prevents them from, for eg., lying? It is the force of “Sammā Vācā” (right speech) which is one of the fifty two mental formations (samkhāras). It stands as a preventive of lying, slander, using harsh words, and idle talk. It is precisely because of this, that is mentioned that abstinence of lying....etc., constitute Right speech.

Those who are desirous of transcending saṃsāra should reflect on the disadvantages of lying, study biographies of the king Suthasoma and Sānu sāmanera, weigh the value of truth, utter truth, refrain from lying, not slander that besmirches the relationships of others, talk so as to encourage the unity of others, refrain from harsh words that wound the hearts of others, utter soft words even when others are using harsh words on you, also refrain from idle talk that defraud the words of the two conversing parties involved, speak words that are morally and spiritually uplifting and thus should be developed and practised the Right speech.

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104. One of the five fundamental precepts of Buddhism.

Thus, for those who practise right speech (*samma Vācā*) as when they deter themselves from lying, the right speech that generally prevails is mundane. It is focussed on persons and objects, conditioned by which it arises. When truth is spoken as against lying, it prevails as eradivative of lying. When benevolent words are spoken against tale carrying, it prevails as eradivative of idle talk. When benevolent words are spoken against harsh speech and frivolous talk, it prevails as eradivative of harsh speech and frivolous talk.

If, for the one who refrains from evil doing, someday beholds the path - consciousness, the mundanely developed Right speech becomes supramundane. The supramundane right speech, unlike mundane right speech which prevails on objects and things that may come under lying, prevails based on *Nirvāna*. This supramundane consciousness in a one single stroke roots out the four ways of unwholesome speech.

### **Right Action (*sammā kammanta*)**

Physical actions that are done towards one's elevation, other's elevation or towards everybody's elevation are delineated "right action." But the Right action discussed under the heading is quite different.

**"Tattha kathamō sammā kammanto? Pānatipātā Veramanī, adinnādanā Veramanī, kamesu miccachaṛā Veramanī, ayam vuccati sammā kammanthō"** In the **Vibhanga Pāli** Right action is mentioned thus. "What is *sammā kammanta*? Cessation from killing, refraining from sexual misbehaviour and stealing are generally categorised as "Right Action."

In the person who vows to undertake a precept such as abstaining from killing, determined not to deviate from the

precept and when an opportunity is presented to kill who then resolves not to kill by considering the moral and ethical disadvantages of it a certain force uprises which impedes the passion to kill. It is this energetic impulse that constitutes the “Right Action,” It is a factor among the fifty two mental formations known as “sammā kammanta.”

As Right Action partakes of the nature of constraining from killing living creatures and other two (refrain from stealing and sexual misbehaviour) aforesaid, the exalted one included them in his discourse on sammā kammantha. One should ponder on the moral retributive effects of them and desist from doing them. When one acquires supra - mundane path consciousness, samma kammanta will also become an attribute of that consciousness and simultaneously the roots of three above - mentioned gloomy actions will be shattered leaving nought behind.

### **Right Livelihood (sammā Ājīva)**

**“Tattha katamo sammā ājīvo? Idha ariya sāvako miccā ājīvam pahāya sammā ājīvena jīvikam kappeti, ayam vuccati samma ājīvo.”**

Right Livelihood has been simply explained thus in the canonical texts:-

“What is Right Livelihood in the noble eightfold path?” In the dispensation, if a noble <sup>105</sup> disciple renouncing wrong livelihood embraces right livelihood and live in accordance - this is termed Right Livelihood (sammā Ājīva.)

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105. Here the word “does not refer exclusively to a clergyman even a devoted lay person can be a disciple.”

Misdeeds as killing are performed by some for sheer joy. Some others for hatred and evil-mindedness. And some others for earning a living. Amidst these misdeeds, the misdeeds carried out for reasons other than livelihood, the forsaking of which, abandonment of which, was aforementioned as sammā kammanta. Except for the purport of livelihood, the relinquishment of misdeeds, such as lying, done for all the other reasons was aforesaid as "Right speech." **The relinquishment and abandonment of misdeeds resulting by way of earning livelihood is epitheted "Right Livelihood."**

Aspirant to Nirvana at the outset needs cleansing of his livelihood. In order to cleanse one's livelihood, one should guard oneself from committing moral breaches such as killing and should also refrain from engaging in what has been explained as something not to be done by the truth seeking laity-these are the trade of weapons, slaves, meat, intoxicating drinks and intoxicants. One must earn one's living by wholesome livelihoods such as farming, pharmaceuticals....etc. Although by a wholesome livelihood one's domestic life becomes in consonance with dhamma, one's monastic life does not become so. Therefore mendicants after forsaking farming....etc should live in conformity with the dhamma. Before achieving the transcendental path consciousness, if the aspirant (of Nirvana) doesn't infringe the moral code, at the time of attaining to transcendental path consciousness, right livelihood becomes a composite part of the supra-mundane consciousness.

### **Right Effort (sammā vāyāma)**

**"Tattha katamo samma vāyāmo? Idha bhikkhu an uppannam pāpakānam akusalānam dhammānam**

annuppādāya chandam janeti vayāmati, vīriyam ārahati, cittam pagganhāti. padahati, uppannānam pāpakānam akusalānam dhammānam pahānāya chandam janeti, vāyamati, vīriyam ārahati, cittam paggamhāti, padahati, anuppannānam kusalānam dhammānam uppādāya chandam janeti. vāyamati, vīriyam ārahati, cittam pagganhāti, padahati, uppannānam kusalānam dhammānam thitīyā asammosāya bhiyyo bhāvāya vepullāya bhavanaya paripūriyā chandam janeti, vayamati, vīriyam ārahati, cittam pagganhāti, padahati ayam vuccati sammā vayamo.”

Right Effort is thus expatiated in the canonical texts:-

“What is right effort? If a person in Buddha's dispensation strives hard, diligently, girding his loins, putting forth tremendous effort to suppress, mitigate and extenuate low, mild misdeeds and do similarly with low, mild misdeeds that have already been committed by him. And the person strives hard diligently, girding loins and putting forth tremendous effort to do good deeds that the person has been hitherto avoiding and put forth such effort in sustaining the good deeds that the person already have been performing; this is what is termed “Right Effort”

It is clear from the above paragraph that effort exerted to not to do demerits which one has been not doing, to destroy the roots of evil that is already in one's mind, to generate meritorious deeds that one has not been doing, to do and sustain wholesome actions that one has already been doing is called “sammā vāyāma” or “Right Effort”

In the mind of the heedless person who does not guard his thoughts, body and speech any evil root can be born.



The one who does not allow oneself to commit demeritorious actions that one has not done and so conducts one- self in discipline unbreached and concentration and insight meditation that one is exerting to ward off uncommitted sins which is the first - step in Right Effort. The one who exerts similarly in so far as to avert demerits committed by oneself takes the second - step in Right Effort.

Unwholesome thoughts arise with no effort whereas wholesome ones have to be generated with great effort by performing meritorious actions. The effort to generate unborn merit by adhering to liberality, virtue etc. while being intact in concentration and insight meditation, is the third step of Right Effort.

Discipline of the worldly person is inconstant. Perchance a vigorous disciplinarian today may be a flagrant violater of discipline tomorrow. And so is it with his wisdom and concentration. If someone sustains his discipline and rigorously meditate until he reaches the path - consciousness and thence Nirvana, such a one is said to uphold his developed wholesome actions.....etc, which we term the “the development of Right Effort”

Thus the Right Effort that initially finds expression is worldly. But when one attains to supramundane path consciousness, Right effort dawns as a composite factor in the supramundane path - consciousness.

## **Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati)**

“Tattha katamā sammā sati? Idha bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajānō satimā vineyya loke abhinna domanassam, vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajānō satimā vineyya loke abhinnā domanassam, citte cittanupassī viharati ātāpi sampajānō satimā vineyya loke

**abhinna domanassam, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhinna domanassam, ayam vuccati sammā sati”**

In the canonical texts, the exalted one states:-

“What is Right Mindfulness? Bhikkhus, in this dispensation a <sup>106</sup> Bhikkhu possessed of the effort of curbing the defilements, possessed of right wisdom, of proper heedfulness, living with appropriate reflection of impermanence regarding the four elements (Mahā bhūta rūpa) making up the body, eschewing five - skandha conditioned greed and aversion, by reflecting on the three feelings, experiencing in them impermanence eschewing the five skandha - conditioned like and dislike, possessed of relevant wisdom, fully heedful, realizing impermanence concerning lust - fraught mind, eschewing five - skandha conditioned like and dislike, possessed of effort that curbs defilements, also possessed of relevant wisdom, fully heedful, reflection on impermanence on the basis of hindrances (Neevarana), eschewing like and dislike in the five - khandha dependent world. All this is known as “Right Mindfulness.”

It has been pointed out in this discourse that the heedfulness or involvement of the meditator's mind, who is desirous of attaining Nirvāna with feelings, thoughts, (consciousness's) physical sensations and <sup>107</sup> dhamma (mental concomitants or caitasika) without allowing it to traverse beyond the pale of these four factors is “Right Mindfulness.” The mind of one

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106. Here since the Buddha is addressing a convocation of monks, the word “Bhikkhu” is used. In fact the reader should be minded. by the readers as “every Buddhist.”

107. Dhamma meditation circumscribes mental concomittants, aggregates, sense bases, factors of enlightenment, the four noble truths and thus enspheres the widest array of meditative elements.

who has not tamed it so as it to be fixed on one object is a freakish mind. By this sort of a mind no way or fruit can be realised. Wherefore, who is desirous of attaining Nirvana should take an object such as a part of one's body or whatever and endeavor to keep one's awareness fixed for a long time, such mindfulness is of worldly provenance, and which at the dawning of transcendental path - consciousness becomes integrated into the supramundane.

## Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi)

**“Tattha katamā sammā samādhi? Idha bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkam savicaram vivekajam pītisukham pathamajjhānam upasampajja viharati, vitakka vicārānam vūpasamā ajjnattam sampasādanam cetaso ekodhibhavam avitakkam avicāram samādhiyam pīti sukham dutiyajjhanam upasampajja viharati. Pītiyaca virāga upekkhako viharati satova sampajāno. Sukhanca kāyena patismvedeti yamtam ariyā āvikkhanti upekkhaco satimā sukhavihāriti tatiyajjhanam upasmpajja viharati, sukhass ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbecca somanassa, domanassānam attamgama adukkhama sukham upekkhā sati pārissuddhim catuttajjhanam upasampajja viharati, ayam vuccati sammā samādhi”**

In consonance with canonical texts “Right Concentration” is predicated to be the four ecstatic concentrations. To wit, the first, second third and fourth Jhanas (trances). By “concentration” is meant a certain principle that keeps the mind one - pointed, without allowing it to wander in a freakish way from one object to another, with respect to a particular object.

<sup>108</sup>Ten kasinas, ten impurities, body parts like hair, inhalation - exhalation, the four sublime states that include

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108. Ten objects that includes colours, earth, fire, water, wind....etc.

compassion, sympathy, altruistic joy and equanimity-the ecstasy gained by taking any object out of these twenty five objects and concentrating the mind on it is known as the first rupavacara Jhana. The "preliminary kāmāvacara concentration" experienced by those who are involved in samatha and vidarshana meditation is also included in this "first Rupavacara Jhana."

The ecstasy reached for the second time after having meditated further on the objects chosen out of the above twenty five is known as the "second Jhana." Similarly can be explained the third and the fourth jhanas.

Yet these ecstasies or Jhanas are worldly. For the one who perseveres in meditation when at some point attains to path-consciousness one of the ecstasies which the one had been accustomed to practise will become and show itself as a composite part of the supramundane consciousness, which is termed supramundane right concentration.

### **How The Eight Factors Are Sized Into Khandas (Skandhas)?**

Right speech, right action and right livelihood are classified under "Sila" or discipline. These three factors embody the eight stipulations of celibacy. i. e. to refrain from the two bodily unwholesome actions, the four unwholesome actions of speech and distancing from <sup>109</sup> "false livelihood." To complete right action bodily demerit should be put aside. To complete right speech the four demerits of speech should be shed. To complete right livelihood, false livelihood should be shed. Thus done, the eight stipulations of celibacy would be fulfilled.

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109. To refrain from taking on false religions and doctrines and doing bad and atrocious occupations.

Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are classified under “samadhi skhandha.” Right understanding and right thoughts are classified under “pragnās-khandha” where the “Pragnā” means wisdom. Thus the noble eight - fold path is condensed to three khandhas, namely, sila, samadhi and pragna khandhas.

## **How the supramundane path can be Reached?**

Amidst the numerous tasks to be fulfilled by people in the world, one of the most difficult type is attaining to the supramundane way. To think it an easy task and setting about doing meditation will not bring any beneficial result. However hard one may try meditating, following the wrong path would not take one to the desired goal. Therefore the correct system should be learnt at the outset and then proceed with meditation.

One bent on attaining the goal should first be placed on the “ground of Vidarshanā.” This means one must, either by consulting an expert teacher or reading the orthodox manuscripts, get a clear idea of the five skandhas, twelve <sup>110</sup> ayatanas, eighteen <sup>111</sup> dhatus (elements), twenty two organs, the four noble truths and theory of conditioned genesis (Pratitya samuppāda) which centre around vidarshanā. Thereafter one must master the way in which Vidarshanā should be performed and following the rules of disciplinary law (sila) start vidarshanā meditation, by setting apart some free time or by entirely

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110. The six cognitive faculties and their corresponding objects. The term ayatana means place, sphere, entrance, or point of support.

111. The six sense faculties, their six sense objects and the six varieties of resultant consciousness.

renouncing the worldly life, concentrating on the impermanence of mind and corporeality, else by any method prescribed by a teacher.

The development of all the eight factors of the noble path takes place in whoever continuing Vidarshana meditation. To so develop the eight factors, there is no other way other than meditation! In one who practises Vidarshana meditation, wisdom grows acuter and acuter and hence the defilements thinner and thinner. Thus, when wisdom has progressed to a considerable extent, a reasonable degree of loathsomeness secured for samsāric existence and the mind leaning towards Nirvānic bliss, the developed eight noble factors appears in transcendental form annihilating doubt and related stock of defilements preventing the yogi's being born in lower worlds for ever and being born in the higher realm more than seven times, manifest with Nirvāna as the base.

The foremost transcendental path that the yogin experiences is called "Sotapathi Magga." Having attained to this path, the person gets himself free from worldly clutches and elevates himself to rank of an "Arya," a noble person. Never ever shall such a one become worldly again. The samsāric suffering he is to experience further is very little. In the Pāli suttas parables galore indicating the minuteness of suffering he will undergo and immensity of suffering he has sloughed. In order to vanquish the little defilements and suffering that the sōtāpathi acquirer has in store, he needs continue with Vidarshanā meditation with unflinching energy and courage. While so continuing, the noble eight factors that one has been developing get ever and ever more refined and emerge three succeeding times with increasingly potent supramundane consciousness'.

The second supramundane path that dawns is “Sakadāgāmi” and third is “Anāgāmi” and fourth and last is “Arhatship.” There is no defilement that lingers after the state of Arhatship has been achieved. Then one has only the five skandhas that is the result of past causes. After death, he is released from even this (“five skandhas) and anupadishesha Nirvana is attained, gaining perfect freedom. Except for this (Buddha's) dhamma, there is no other way or doctrine that procure one with freedom of eternal liberation. If the supramundane path emerges, liberation is certain. Therefore, noble eightfold path is the true, most certain, royal road to liberation from suffering.

## The Four Qualities Of The Noble Eightfold Path.

“Maggassa Neeyanattthō hetutthō dassauattthō adipathēyattō” - as enunciated thus in the **Patisambhidā Magga** - the noble eightfold path should be known as is expressed through the four qualities.

The four qualities are

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|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Neeyanattthaya | 2. Hétutthaya        |
| 3. Dassanattthaya | 4. Adipathēyattthaya |

### 1. Neeyānattthaya

If in somebody's <sup>112</sup>mind - conflux arise one of the supramundane path's, the ejection of him from the saṃsāric

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112. Mind - conflux = santana = mind and its other related elements in a state of flux, hence “conflux.”

ocean of suffering is the quality of “Neeyānatthaya.” The supramundane paths, according to the way in which they are ascended, are four in number. The first supramundane path, Sotapathi, eradicates various heretical views (**Miccha ditthi**) and skeptical doubts with respect to the doctrine of the Buddha. So also attainment of **sōtapathi magga** banishes for ever all defilements that makes one born in any types of hellish existence. In the way of rendering null and void all the evil karmas in past that tended towards a hellish - type of existence, making one do naught unwholesome deeds in the future one is dragged in to the further shore of a non - accumulator of evil karma. One is also ridden to the further shore in that the one is made a nonacquirer of the karma that makes one reborn repeatedly like a worldly person and thus is made to cross the happy realm of saṃsāric existence as well. This is the way the attainer of Sotapathi is flown across the saṃsāric ocean.

Thus when one is carried across the turbulent saṃsāra, from defilements and karmas, one reaches the supramundane ground of sotapathi. The term “ground” here is meant not for a place but a stature or position. The term ground (**bhūmi**) is applied to one's spiritual position or standard for instance as **Buddha bhūmi**, **Srāvaka.. (disciple) bhūmi** etc. To one who has ascended the supramundane noble ground of sōtāpathi can spur on great joy on account of his being released from the clutches of a hellish existence. This in itself is a great relief for him. Even if he reborns in a pleasurable realm, he is far from being a heretic. He does not get rooted, like a pillar, in saṃsāra. He does not commit unwholesome deeds. He is not swayed by the rushing tides of saṃsara. Day by day, he closes upon the oasis of Anupadisēsa Nirvana. He does not, like his worldly colleagues, go farther and farther away from the oasis of Nirvāna. The sōtāpana even when born in a happy (sugati) realm such



as the human realm does not get retrograded in terms of wealth, luxury and the capacity for spiritual improvement. With the progress of time he comes to associate himself in places of increased wealth, luxury and spiritual vigour. One who has been born in Brahma realms after having developed Jhānas or spiritual ecstasies will never ever come again to be born in kāma loka (pleasure realms: human realm and heavenly realms). He reborns in the same Brahma realm or in a realm higher than that. The one (sōtāpana) so born, associating worldly pleasures and when fed up of it, develop higher supramundane paths, spurn the five Khandhas and ultimately reach Anupadisesa Nirvāna. This is all the “Neeyanattaya” of the sōtāpana. One should likewise understand the “Neeyanattaya” of the higher supramundane paths of sakrudāgami, Anagami and Arhat.

## 2. Hétutthaya

Reaching Nirvāna by destroying infectious agents on its path is “Hetutthaya.” If one is a sōtāpana, this imbues him with all the Aryan (noble) virtues never ever to be dissociated from him, even his discipline (disciplinary characteristics) advances from day to day, month to month, year to year and life to life, and also gets stabilized. So also improves and stabilizes his various meditative concentrations. A similar fate is shared by his wisdom as well. Still, so also, would stabilize and improve his “the four foundations of mindfulness,” “sammappadhanas (the four - fold effort to stop the growth of sin and the development of good),” “iddhipādas (the four foundations of psychic power),” “Indriyas (the five seats of psychical growth),” “balas (the five psychical powers which lead to Nibbāna)” “bojjhangas (the seven - fold attributes of enlightenment)” and the higher supramundane paths. As when such wholesome

merit develops, the noble person comes closer and closer to Anupādisesa Nibbāna (Nirvāna). As sothapāthi is a basis for such assemblage of merit, it is as well a reason for reaching Nirvana. Meritoriousness and ability to reach Nirvāna are benefits conferred on the sōtapana as a consequence of "Hetutthaya" of sōtapathi. Hétutthaya of higher supramundane paths should be known likewise.

### 3. Dassanatthaya

The supramundane path is made primely of wisdom. Thereat the meditator or yōgin sees or experiences Nirvana or the four noble truths emperically in a way unprecedented or in a way never seen hitherto. This nature of emperically seeing Nirvāna or the four noble truths is the quality of "Dassanatthaya." For, however long the sōtāpana may wander in the samsāra amidst worldly pleasures, he shall never ever forget what he saw emperically, i.e. Nirvāna. If he is to reminisce Aryan truths after several aeons of time he is going to recognise them immediately, just as sun, moon and other starry objects are going to be instantly visible for one who looks up after looking down for quite a while. It is a benefit conferred on the sothāpana in consequence of the quality of "Dassanatthaya" inherent in sothāpathi. Likewise should be known the "Dassanatthaya" of higher supramundane paths.

### 4. Adipathéyatthaya

The mind - current of the one who has attained to supramundane paths is its own master and is not ruled by craving as in the case of the mind - current of the worldly one. This is "Adipathéyatthaya." "Adipathéyatthaya" means subjugating something and making it in tune to oneself. The supramundane path causes the mind to be controllable and

makes it to be the master of itself without allowing it to be carried away by sense objects of craving. The worldly mind is totally distracted and carried away by the dominant force of craving. Therefore the worldly person performs meritorious deeds with an eye to acquiring saṁsāric pleasures. Once sothapathi magga is attained craving is incapacitated in its role as the monarch of the mind - current. At the instant its paraphernaliac - defilements are also dethroned from their elitist positions. The supramundane path itself becomes the emperor of the Craving - liberated sothāpathi mind - current. Therefore a sotāpanna does not indulge in any unwholesome action that betakes him to a subhuman existence. He performs meritorious actions in order to curtail existence, not to prolong it, and for the sake of complete liberation (**moksha**). Thus his meritorious action, free from the yoke of craving, becomes more refined. Not indulging in any action that fructifies in a subhuman existence, not performing any meritorious action to prolong existence, not forsaking the <sup>113</sup> Triple Gem and not soliciting the help of any other personage than the Buddha are some of the benefits accrued to the sotapana as a consequence of the quality of Adipatheyatthaya. Likewise should be known the Adipatheyatthaya of the higher supramundane paths.

As to find what the path of true liberation, a path should be evaluated in terms of the aforementioned four qualities. If in something there is "Neeyatathaya" - the quality of delivering one to the farther shore from the ocean of saṁsāra, "Hétuttaya" - the quality of causing one to attain Nirvana, "Dassanathaya" - the quality of experientially seeing Nirvana, "Adipatheyatthays" - the quality of mind superceding transcendently over the base and vile defilements of the worldly mind, that is the true path

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113. The Buddha, his doctrine and the community of disciples.

to liberation. These four qualities are indubitably present in the noble eightfold path. And these very qualities are found in none other. Therefore, the blessed one proclaimed the noble eightfold path comprising of Right Understanding.....etc. as the surest way leading to the cessation of suffering (Dukkha Nirodagāmini Pratipada Satya.)

## Different Ways of Expressing The Truths.

The Exalted One discoursed on the four noble truths as “Chattāri Ariyasaccani.”<sup>114</sup> so also he discoursed of fourfold truths without mentioning the “noble” as “chattāri saccani dukkham, dukkha samudayo, dukkha Nirodho, dukkha Nirodha gamini patipada.” One should not misunderstand the four noble truths and the four fold truths as being the same. The sermons in which craving is laid down as the sole cause of suffering are the elaborations of the four noble truths. Besides craving, there are so many secondary and paraphernaliac, adjunct causes that brings about suffering. As in these characteristics are inherent suffering, although they are of considerable suffering - inducing potential, yet, they cannot of themselves cause suffering without the dominant force of craving, therefore, in the four noble truths craving is given as the one single factor that causes suffering. In the fourfold truths craving and all its suffering - generating subordinate paraphernalia are included. In the discourse of the fourfold truths, the cause of suffering is expatiated in five dhammas (principles). To wit, craving, secondary defilements other than craving, secondary demeritorious actions (thoughts), meritorious roots with de-

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114. Such as non - greed, non - ill - will and non - delusion

filements and secondary actions with defilements (or thoughts or dharmas). In accordance with these dharmas or principles, the fourfold truths have been explored in sermons. Here are the four ways in which the truths have been set:

- (1) **Tattha katamo dukkhasamudayo? tanha ca avasesa ca kilesa, avasesa ca akusalā dhammā tini ce kusala mūlāni sāsavani, avasesā ca sāsavā kusalā dhammā ayam vuccati dukkhasamudayo.**
- (2) **Tattha katamam dukkham? sāsavānam kusalākusalanam dhammanam vipakā ye ca dhammā kiriyā neva akusalanākusalanam ca kammavipakā sabban ca rūpam idam vuccati dukkham.**
- (3) **Tattha katamo dukkhanirodho? tanhaya ca avasesanan ca kilesanam avasesanaca akusalanam dhammanam tinnanca kusalamūlānam sāsavānam avasesananca sāsavānam kusalanam dhammānam pahānam ayam vuccati dukkhanirodo.**
- (4) **Tattha katamā dukkhanirodhagāminī patipada? Idha bhikkhu yasmim samaye lokuttaram jhanam bhāveti niyyanikam apacayagamim ditthigatānam pahānāya pathamāya bhumiya pattiya vivicceva kamehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkam savicāram vivekajam pīti sukham pathamajjhanam upasampajja viharati dukkhapatipadam dandhabhinnaṃ tasmim samaye atthamgiko maggo hoti. Samma ditthi - pe - samma samadhi. Ayam vuccati dukkhanirodhagāminīyā patipada. Avasesā dhamma dukkha nirodha gaminiya patipadāya smpayuttā.**
- (1) Amid the four-fold truths what is the reason or cause of suffering? Craving, secondary defilements, secondary merit producing dharmas, the three meritorious roots with defilements. (as foresaid in the previous paragraph)

and secondary, adventitious meritorious dharmas are the suffering - producing dharmas or factors.

- (2) Amid the four-fold truths what is Dukkha? The consequences of meritorious and demeritorious actions, if a certain dharma be an action, not merit accruing, nor demeritorious, nor the result of karma - these dharmas and all corporeal forms are suffering.
- (3) Amid the four fold truths what is the cessation of suffering? The cessation of craving, secondary defilements, secondary demeritorious dharmas, the three meritorious roots with defilements and subordinate meritorious dharmas with defilements - the vanquishing of which is termed "Dukkha nirodha," the cessation of suffering.
- (4) Amid the fourfold truths, what is the eightfold path? In the dispensation, a Bhikkhu, at a certain time, in order to root out heretical views and reach the first supramundane path, having developed the supramundane Jhanic consciousness which carries the disciple away from the stormy, rasping ocean of samsara to the off - shore of Nirvanic bliss deleting births and deaths that cause merits which betakes the disciple to the <sup>115</sup> triple realms of existence, and foresaking sensual pleasures attains to the first Jhāna endowed with strong effort, supra - normal psychic powers - cum - consisting of initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness and one - pointedness - living thus constitutes the eightfold path. Right understanding, Right thoughts, Right speech, Right action, Right Livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, Right concentration comprise the way leading to the

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115. Heavenly worlds, rupa bhrama and Arupa brahma worlds.

cessation of suffering. The other dharma's are merely paraphernalia of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

## The True Fourfold Functions To Be Executed

Mere theoretical knowledge of the four noble truths would not result in the deliverance from suffering. There are four tasks to be accomplished on behalf of the FNTs. The proper fruit of knowing the FNTs would only ensue once those functions are appropriately discharged. Namely those functions are **parinṇa**, **prahāna**, **sākshāt karana** and **Bhāvanā**.

Herein, **parinṇa** function is of the FNT of suffering. Intuitive understanding of the separate characteristics of name and form and general characteristics such as impermanence is the **parinṇa** function. **Prahāna** function is of the FNT of the cause of suffering. The expulsion of craving from the mind-current is the **prahāna** function. **Sākshāt karana** function is of the FNT of the extinction of suffering. Intuitive experience of Nirvāna is the **sākshāt karana** function. **Bhāvanā** is of the FNT of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Developing and practising the elements of the noble eightfold path until they culminate in the supramundane level is the **Bhāvanā** function. Fervently learning the FNTs, fulfilling the tasks of **parinṇa**, **prahāna**..... etc. May all be delivered from saṃsāric suffering..

As a consequence of the merits acquired by us in compiling this treatise, may all living beings be delivered from saṃsāra and reach the supreme beatitude of Nirvāna.

Exposition of the FNTs Ends.